

APR 24 1959

# THE MONTH

APRIL 1959

**'PROVING GOD': A DISCUSSION**

R. A. KNOX

BENET CANFIELD

GERARD SITWELL

**THE MORAL ASPECT OF MONOPOLY**

PAUL CRANE

**AFTER BATTLE**

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# 'PROVING GOD': A DISCUSSION<sup>1</sup>

By

R. A. KNOX

THE QUESTION-MASTER: The subject we are discussing this evening is, *How would you prove that a Deity exists?* We are not, therefore, calling the fact in question; we are only concerned to find out which is the best way of putting it across to somebody who doesn't believe in it. By the way, I should explain that we've got one of them here in the studio tonight. We've got Professor Tolbooth here, holding (as he says) a watching brief for secularism. He doesn't undertake to be convinced of the fact that a Deity exists, but he's going to tell us which of the various methods of proof suggested is most convincing. What's that? Oh, the Professor says his attitude ought really to be described as not understanding what is meant by the statement, *A Deity exists*. I didn't think there was anything the Professor didn't understand, but we seem to have hit on something. Let's say, then, that he will tell us which of the various methods of proof he finds least meaningless. Then, let's see, who else have we got here? Canon Crump, I expect his voice will be familiar to a good many listeners. Then there's Mr. Leighton, whose big work is just in the press, I understand; *The Mysticism of Denys the Areopagite*, is that it? Oh, the pseudo-Denys; bad luck. And we've Dr. Varden, from Upwashcott; we hope he's going to tell us all about the scholastic point of view. And finally we've got a very distinguished visitor here, Monsieur Deschamps, who isn't often over in England, he tells me, but most of us know his books very well in an English translation. Well, that's the team; who's going to set the ball rolling? Canon, will you give us a lead?

<sup>1</sup> This article together with the previous article entitled *Towards a New Apologetic* (THE MONTH, March 1959) and two subsequent articles form the first chapters of an unfinished book by the late Mgr. R. A. Knox. They are here published for the first time by kind permission of Mr. Evelyn Waugh, the owner of the copyright of these articles.—ED.

*Canon Crump:* My immediate reaction is to ask for a clearer ruling about our terms of reference. I mean, you suggest that we're discussing how to prove the existence of God; for whose benefit? Somebody who believes it already? But that's obviously waste of time. Somebody who doesn't? That, commonly, is wasting one's breath. Am I sabotaging the discussion?

*Q.-M.:* Not exactly. But I think we'd like to hear you put all that rather more at length.

*Crump:* What I mean is, I think, that the ordinary Christian believes in God by a kind of intuition. Not, to be sure, that direct knowledge which the mystics are often supposed to enjoy, but a kind of appreciative faculty which tells him that "this thing is all right." He has been brought up in certain beliefs by teachers who were, at the time, obviously more competent to form conclusions than he was; and, unless some tempest of the soul drives him away from his bearings, he sails an even course. He sheds his earlier beliefs, in fairies, perhaps in ghosts, but not his belief in religion—that is different. Later on, he meets people who hold different views, and falls into argument with them; and now, perhaps, he does begin to throw up earthworks of controversy; borrows from books, or thinks up for himself, *reasons* for clinging to the supernatural. But these are only temporary positions which he takes up under fire. Just so, if you ask a man why he likes, say, *Hamlet*, he will devise reasons for his preference; but the preference was there before the reasons were present to his mind—he was under the spell of his author. If man was made for God, isn't it intelligible that there should be the same kind of *rapport*, here too? You can call it, if you like, the religion of experience. The unreflective Christian doesn't need to argue about the existence of God, any more than the plain man needs to argue about the existence of the house next door; in the one case as in the other, it's sufficient to be aware of the fact.

*Professor Tolbooth:* Might I interrupt, just to say that the word "aware" is an ambiguous one? I wouldn't have thought that you could have put the supposed experience of God on the same footing as your experience of the world around you. You remember seeing the house next door, and you can infer its existence, perhaps, from the fact that none of your windows look out that way. But the existence of a Deity should be called,

shouldn't it, a construction which you put upon your experience, rather than a part of your experience itself. You describe certain events in your life as providential, but they might have been accidental; you claim that you have had an answer to prayer, but the thing might have happened just the same whether you had prayed or not. I wouldn't have thought you could be *aware* of God, in the strict sense, except by some kind of special revelation. Would you agree there, Varden?

*Dr. Varden:* *Aware* of God? Without a supernatural revelation, yes. Without a special revelation, no.

*Crump:* Well, I withdraw the word "aware." But I would still say that the unreflective Christian finds the proposition *There is no God* false to his whole experience. He turns away from the atheist orator in the Park, without giving him the favour of an audition. His whole world-picture is built up upon a theistic interpretation of the universe. The values—he keeps his word, controls his appetites, subscribes to charities, with the thought of eternity in his mind. So much, even for the half-Christian. But suppose him to be a man of deeply religious habit, the case is far stronger. Here is a mind, maybe scarred with the memories of spiritual conflict, when a difficult decision was made, or a sinful habit overcome; here, at least, is one who has made most of his friendships in a spiritual context, dedicated all his ambitions, consciously, to a spiritual end. If you put the case for scepticism to such a man, he will rule it out of court; it is false, as I say, to the whole of his religious experience. But, look here, you're letting me do all the talking. Put someone else on, hadn't you better?

*Q.-M.:* Let's see, have we got any unreflective Christians here? Leighton, that hardly seems the right way to describe you; but you did write a book about religious experience once, didn't you? What do you do about the atheist man in Hyde Park? I rather enjoy him myself.

*Leighton:* I can't pretend to share your enthusiasm. No, I don't blame Canon Crump's friend for walking past and taking no notice. I *am* rather frightened of the word "experience," though, in that connection; I don't know it's much better than "aware." Of course, you get people talking like that; I remember a man at one of these Workers' Education shows trying to persuade us about the existence of God by thumping his chest and saying,

"I feel it in here." As if the psycho-analysts had left us any excuse for believing in unaccountable certitudes! How often one has searched for some quotation in a book lately read; you were not sure of the chapter, but one thing was beyond doubt—it was on the left-hand page. And you spent half an hour before you discovered it, on the right-hand page after all.

*Crump:* Surely it's rather different in a matter of such importance. I should have thought one would hardly be allowed to go wrong.

*Varden:* Excuse me, but aren't you using an illegitimate minor premiss? Your full process of thought is, "I feel certain of God's existence, and in a matter of such moment God (if He exists) wouldn't allow me to go wrong." You can only draw your conclusion by begging the question.

*Leighton:* Yes, I think that's fair enough. Don't you see, Canon, your friend isn't really saying to himself, "If that man enjoyed the interior certainty which I enjoy, he couldn't talk so foolishly." He is putting up a kind of half-conscious sales-resistance, as most of us do when a canvasser tries to interest us in the political questions of the day; "That kind of thing," he says to himself, "is not in my line." Not that it is "false to his experience"; it is simply an intrusion on the sanctuary of his mind. A notice-board, inscribed "Trespassers will be prosecuted," excludes the propaganda of atheism, just as another notice-board excludes the temptation to lie or to steal. It is his will, not his intellect, that rejects the proposition.

*Tolbooth:* Excuse me, but I'd like to get you right about this. Aren't you saying that the common man's belief in God is an example of wishful thinking? His refusal to lie or steal is dictated to him by what, for want of a better word, we must call his conscience. Surely you're not going to claim that his conscience informs him of the existence of a Deity? Even Kant would hardly say that. When I tell the canvasser—I admit I do tell him—that politics don't interest me, he says they ought to; and it's an open question which of us is right. But the question whether a God exists or not, is surely one that everybody *must* be interested in?

*Leighton:* It certainly seems to have a fascination for the atheist. But my point is that, even if the unreflective Christian has little or no ground for his belief, the things he believes in may nevertheless be true. As he will fight for his country without being an

expert in diplomacy, he will worship God without being an expert in theology. After all, it's a very small proportion of the human race that can really form a valuable judgment about such things. Wouldn't you admit, Doctor, that there is something to be said for the faith of the charcoal-burner, even if he can't tell you, for the life of him, what a Prime Mover is?

*Varden:* The charcoal-burner is under an obligation to learn the answer to any theological difficulties which he is capable of understanding.

*Q.-M.:* But not otherwise? The Light-Programme listener isn't bound to tune in to the Third, just because we're talking theology?

*Varden:* Decidedly not. He knows, of course, that difficulties have been raised at a higher level; but because he can't deal with them himself, he's content to leave them to the expert.

*Leighton:* Exactly—to the expert. No doubt you'd mean by that, the theologian. I would take up the same position, only for me the expert would be the mystic. I don't feel happy, you see, about your metaphysical approach to the problem; what we want to do is not to know about God, but to know God. And the organ by which we do that is not the intellect, but the will—at a low level, with your ordinary unreflective Christian; at a very high level, with the mystic. And just as your charcoal-burner, Doctor, is really appealing to St. Thomas Aquinas all the time; so my unreflective Christian is really appealing to St. John of the Cross. His will is feeling its way towards those heights at which God is not known about, but known.

*Q.-M.:* I see signs of a certain restlessness about the team. Both the Professor and Dr. Varden look as if they had a bone to pick with you. Professor, let's take yours first.

*Tolbooth:* I was only wanting to get one point cleared up—does Mr. Leighton give up the whole idea of proving the existence of God on rational grounds? Are we to understand that the mystic, too, is an "unreflective" Christian?

*Leighton:* I would rather, I think, call him "unreflexive." I mean that to him, at least when he is at his prayers, no opportunity is given of unbending and considering what he is at; all his intellectual processes are in suspense. So, of course, at the higher stages of mysticism, is the will; but that needn't detain us for the moment. Let's see, you wanted to know whether I "give up"

the whole idea of proving God's existence by reason? Well, not in the sense that I disagree with the metaphysical arguments you will hear from Dr. Varden; I only mean that to me they seem unimportant. That was Pascal's attitude, if you remember; what mattered was the "God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, not the God of the philosophers." To me, religion is something like music; you appreciate it by feeling it, not by registering the number of vibrations. And the expert *knows*.

*Crump:* After all, the Age of Reason has had a pretty long innings. It wouldn't be altogether surprising if it were to be succeeded by an Age of Will; and there seem to be signs of that already on the Continent, if not in England. If you'll excuse my saying so, Professor, you philosophers have so long been staging a kind of palace revolution against Reason that you'll only have yourselves to blame for it if she is dethroned one of these days, and you lose your job.

*Varden:* I was going to say that my job, too, involves the use of reason, though I dare say the Professor would think we put her to very menial employment at the seminary. But I have to lecture about natural theology, and that means not only proving that God exists, but showing what He is like—and all that without having recourse to revelation. Now, I can quite understand Mr. Leighton's preference for a mystical approach to the matter; and I should be the last to deny that some souls have been very highly favoured with direct visions of the truth. Didn't St. Thomas see a vision at the end of his life which made all his laborious ratiocinations seem childish? But how are we going to get any information from the mystic about what God is like? We crowd round him when he comes out of his trance, notebook in hand, like a set of newspaper reporters; "Tell us about your experience," we say, "tell us about God. Is He impossible? Is He super-sapient?" and so on. But all the mystic can tell us is that he has had a strange, incommunicable experience. He cannot even tell us about the experience itself; whether it differed, and in what way, from the experiences of the Brahmins, or of Mr. Aldous Huxley. Have I said too much?

*Monsieur Deschamps:* No, excuse me, you have not said enough. The mystic cannot, in the nature of things, be a good witness; he sees God always obliquely, not face to face. Do we not know, many of us, what it is to converse with somebody who attracts us or

interests us very much, and to carry away afterwards no picture of their features? We looked at their eyes, but we did not look at their faces, because we were too busy talking to them. So, to the mystic, as to Moses on Mount Sinai, God says “I will station thee in a cleft of the rock, while my glory passes by, and cover thee with my right hand till I have gone past. So, when I take my hand away, thou shalt follow me with thy eyes, but my face thou canst not see.” It is not merely that the mystic cannot remember what he has seen; he has seen nothing. He was too busy to look round. Only afterwards he begins to think he has seen something, but then it is too late—he has begun to interpret his experiences, to put a gloss on them. Your Professor Toynbee, when now and again he is taken out of himself, tells us that he has seen a vision of history. So your mystic tells us that he has seen a vision of God, but already his waking self has begun to colour the picture. “No,” he says, if he is wise, “I can tell you nothing.”

*Q.-M.*: Well, the question we’ve got to answer is, *How would you prove that a Deity exists?* Both Canon Crump and Mr. Leighton seem inclined to by-pass the whole idea of arguing the point; perhaps it’s time we had another angle on the question. Will Dr. Varden tell us what line he would take, if he came across somebody whom the Canon and Mr. Leighton had failed to convince? I feel sure he can throw some light on our difficulties.

*Varden*: Oh, you mustn’t expect any fireworks from me. I hold by the old metaphysical proofs, as old as Aristotle. Only, perhaps, I should be inclined to single out one, and concentrate attention on that. I mean the proof from contingent and necessary existence.

*Deschamps*: That is to me very interesting. I would like above all things to hear your reason for that.

*Varden*: Well, it always seems to me that if you offer one excuse for throwing up an engagement, the other man may believe you. But if you give two or three, you are put down as a liar at once. And I find that people react in rather the same way to the Five Proofs; why five, if one would do? They get the idea that the Five Proofs are converging proofs, none of them carrying the full weight of the argument by itself, and of course that’s wrong. And this proof, after all, is the basic one. The others tell us about the causes of things, about things in motion, about the varying excellence of things, about the perfect order in which things are disposed; they all take the existence of things for

granted. But the existence of things is the real puzzle which lies behind it all.

*Crump:* Somebody's got to ask what the proof from contingent and necessary existence is, so I may as well.

*Q.-M.:* Thank you, Canon; you've taken a huge load off my mind. Perhaps Dr. Varden—

*Varden:* Let me put it like this—the most mysterious thing in our common experience is the difference between the chimaera, which might have existed, but doesn't, and the hardly less improbable platypus, which *is*. What is this strange phenomenon, which so baffles our powers of expression that we are driven, sometimes, to describe a thing as “really *there*,” when we know that we are only deriving a metaphor from space? Reality, actuality, asseribility (the logician's word)—what is this strange plus-quantity which adds nothing to our notion of what a thing is like, yet adds everything? To claim that it is a mere label, arbitrarily affixed by our thought, is to make shipwreck of philosophy. To say that it is part of the thing's nature or notion, is an abuse of terms; a chimaera is as rich in nature and in notion as a platypus. No, actuality has to be conceived as pumped into the thing—if I may use a vulgar metaphor for the sake of clearness—from a reservoir which lies outside the closed circle of our thought. Somewhere (we fall into spatial metaphors again) there must be an Existential from which all lesser, casual existences are derived. I don't say that's an easy argument to get across; the charcoal-burner isn't going to make much of it. But that's what I should want to say, in so far as I could bring it home to the intelligence of the person I was dealing with.

*Crump:* I'm not quite sure that you've brought it home to mine. But, granted that you could, is it going to make any difference to him? If you write a book on those lines, and the reader is enough of a philosopher to be carried on from one paragraph to the next, he is reading all the time with “his feet on the fender”; in a critical spirit, prepared to admire the strength of the case you are putting up for the existence of a God, but interested all the while in the proof, not in the thing proved. Is it going to make any difference to his *life*? To be sure, you will conclude, in a triumphant series of syllogisms, that it is the duty of man to obey, to love and to serve the Divine Being of whose existence he can now have no further doubt. But you will no

longer command the attention of your audience. It is so easy to switch off the television when the advertisement begins. Can you point to a single instance, either among your own acquaintance or in history, where a man has been led on, unwillingly, by sheer force of argument, to a position in which mere intellectual candour forced him to make the surrender of his soul?

*Leighton:* Pascal would have put it more strongly than that. Beat the atheist in argument (he would say), force him by sheer reasoning to admit the existence of a Deity, without *at the same time* convincing him of his need for redemption, and you have done him an injury. You have robbed him of his last poor shred of excuse—that he sinned in ignorance. He sins, now, against the light; goes on disobeying the God he cannot doubt. Just as the modern educationalist will not let us teach a child the alphabet till it is "reading-ready," so, for Pascal, it is a mistake to convince the atheist till you can make sure of converting the libertine.

*Crump:* Pascal was a pessimist. But, as I was saying, in ordinary life the man you are dealing with is a man who not only doesn't believe in God, but doesn't *want* to believe in God—it's a matter of the will. He's making a mess of his life, and he knows it; but he's too much in love with the pigsty to face the prospect of leaving it. If, by whatever means, you can persuade such a man to *want* God to exist, then he will come to believe that God does exist; I don't know how, you don't know how, but he will.

*Tolbooth:* I don't know whether it's in order for me to make a criticism, but surely, Canon, you're mistaking your terms of reference? We were asked to discuss how we would *prove* the existence of a Deity; you have only told us how you would make a man believe in it—which is a different thing from proving it. I may meet a friend on the first of April and make him believe that his chimney's on fire, but I haven't proved it. In this case, it doesn't even seem to matter, for your purposes, whether a Deity exists or not. You have secured your object, if you induce a disreputable person to lead a more regular life by getting him to believe in an imaginary Deity; just as I have secured my object, if I cure a man of some nervous disease by inducing him to take pills which are really made of bread. Heaven knows I'm not fond of metaphysics, but Dr. Varden has given us a proof which is valid on his own assumptions; you, if you'll excuse my saying so,

have produced nothing but an excellent instance of wishful thinking.

Q.-M.: Well, time's getting on, and we don't seem to have got very far towards solving our problem. Dr. Varden and Professor Tolbooth complain that Canon Crump and Mr. Leighton go in for too much wishful thinking. Canon Crump and Mr. Leighton complain (if I may put it in that way) that Dr. Varden and Professor Tolbooth don't go in for enough thoughtful wishing. Monsieur Deschamps, you will have to be given the casting vote. Which side are you going to come down on?

*Deschamps:* Who shall say? Perhaps on neither; perhaps on both. At least I will be very grateful to Dr. Varden for directing so much attention to the proof from contingent causes. Only perhaps he talks too much about "things"; why *things*, why not *people*? I would say to him, "Drop the platypus as soon as you can, and encourage your reader to take, as a type of actuality—himself." For surely you will admit, Doctor, that you are as good an example of contingent being as the platypus?

*Varden:* Oh, by all means let us take a human being as our example, if you prefer it. Only I hope we are not going to have any Descartes.

*Deschamps:* Rest assured that we will have no Descartes. I celebrated not long ago my birthday; and I found myself reflecting as most of us do on such occasions, "If my first birthday had not happened, what then?" Here is this strange thinking apparatus at work, trying to imagine itself non-existent, chimaera instead of platypus. Myself the thinker, myself the thought, with my own shadow occluding the glass of my perception, I am for the moment, representatively, the whole of reality. That I exist, I cannot doubt; that my own existence belongs to me, is in any way part of my nature, I cannot intelligibly maintain. As well might an actor try to convince us that the spot-light under which he moves is part of his make-up. Consider now; if Mr. Pickwick should walk into this room, we should be surprised should we not? We should want to ask how he got there?

Q.-M.: How the dickens he got there, perhaps. Sorry.

*Deschamps:* How, then, did I get here? The difficulty is the same. Pickwick was projected into the world by Dickens, but as an idea only—man could do no more. By what means, then, am I projected into the world, an actuality? I must somehow

apprehend the notion of a God who *is*, who alone exists in His own right; the Non-ego *par excellence*. And when I encounter that thought, I find myself wondering whether the divergence of thought between the two parties to this discussion, the difference between the theologian and the mystic, is really as irreconcilable as we thought. Let me suggest this—that, at its highest, man’s apprehension of God is conjointly the work of his intellect and of his will. I say “conjointly,” not “simultaneously,” because we have no experience of a state in which two of our faculties are employed at the same time. We do not, at one and the same moment, think and will. But for all that my intellect is myself thinking, and my will is myself desiring—is it impossible, then, that in so momentous an encounter as that of man’s soul with the Divine Fact, they should meet in a point? The “fine point of the soul”—that is good mystical language, is it not, Mr. Leighton?

*Leighton:* Yes, of course it is—in French, anyhow. The mystics seem to be agreed that there is a state in which the faculties of intellect and will are both suspended, both dormant, if you like, and there is a direct contact between the Divine Fact and something other which underlies both intellect and will, the “fine point” of the soul. And you are suggesting that this fine point is an apex at which two converging lines meet, intellect and will?

*Deschamps:* You take my meaning admirably. If the apex of human thought is the knowledge of God, and the apex of human desire is the love of God, who shall say how closely, in their inner nature, the two converge? It may be that the theologian and the mystic are like two climbers, each making the ascent of the same peak, but at a little distance one from the other. So intent is each on his own difficult progress, that he has no time to look round at the steps his neighbour has carved in the snow. No reason to blame either, until either begins to blame the other for not following in his track. After all, so long as the theologian is content to prove the existence of God by the argument from contingent and necessary being, and to take, as a sample of contingent being, himself—what difference is there between the results that emerge? Only that the theologian has come to know, what the mystic has come to feel, his utter dependence on a Reality outside himself. When the mystic declares “I am nothing,” or exclaims, “My God and my all,”

what is he doing? Only turning our prose into poetry. He has made an unconscious inference, from his own insufficiency to the All-sufficiency which is its obverse; but, poet-like, he has comprised the two stages of the argument in a single composite picture. He is like the mathematical genius, chained to a school desk, who does the sum in his head, and is then pestered by Authority to "show his working."

*Crump:* Then may we take it that in the actual concrete case—having to argue with an unbeliever—you would make an appeal at once to his reason and to his conscience, rather on the lines of Pascal?

*Deschamps:* On the lines of Pascal—no. Of course, it is impossible to say what form his great book would have taken if he had lived to finish it. But I think he would have left metaphysics altogether on one side, and appealed *only* to the heart. Man has certain spiritual needs (he would have said), and if you will examine the Christian revelation, you will find that it meets those needs; therefore this revelation must be true. It would have been tremendous, but would it have been convincing?

*Crump:* Yes, I wasn't thinking so much of his method, as of the importance you attach to the moral side of it all. I take it that you would appeal to the man's conscience to fill in the gaps where your metaphysical argument left him unconvinced?

*Deschamps:* Ah, no; I would not be prepared to sin against philosophical honesty. I would not say, "Unfortunately there is something of a gap in the argument here; let us hasten to fill it up with the putty of sentiment." Man is called upon to serve God with his whole heart and his whole mind, not with a fifty-fifty amalgam of the two. The two faculties should, by rights, function together as smoothly as the two lobes of the brain. In practice, they have to be stimulated alternately, and by a single process—the recognition of our own inadequacy as creatures is at once the guarantee of God's existence and the basis of all worship.

*Tolbooth:* Then you wouldn't need to have a particularly abandoned sinner to work on?

*Deschamps:* No, I see the person I am arguing with as a young man, perhaps, harassed by the doubts of adolescence, and demanding to have reason shown for neglecting them; as a man in middle life, who has long been content to outgrow the dogmas of his childhood, but now hankers after a steadier view of the

world, to light him into old age; or perhaps as one who has been brought up apart from religious influences, and feels a gap, a sense of being defrauded. Such people, as a rule, are extremely suspicious of anything like an appeal to sentiment; conscious of wishing, they are almost scrupulous in their desire to avoid wishful thinking. But at the same time they are—how could they not be?—in a highly self-conscious state; they cannot really approach the problem in a detached way, as if it were a detective story or a newspaper competition. To them, accordingly, I would say, "You are preoccupied with yourself? Very well, it is of yourself we will talk; the lodge is tiled, the circle is closed; you are the thinker, you the thought. With Descartes, you may doubt the existence of an external world, with Berkeley, you may deny it, but one thing certainly exists—you, the doubter. And yet, this fact of your existence is not part of your nature; your nature might be complete, as a poet's dream, without it. It is borrowed money, not part of the estate. Borrowed, whence? Unless there is, somewhere outside yourself, a Nature to which existence belongs, as of right." Oh, the argument will be all according to the books, as scholastic as you will. But the diagram which illustrates the argument shall be the man himself; in his own mind, how important, and yet, even to his own mind, how inadequate! He is not lost in a maze of abstractions; it is of his very real self that we speak. His whole sympathies are engaged in the argument; he is like the land forces of Athens in Sicily, following, with the unconscious movements of their bodies, the progress of the sea-battle. The argument shall convince him purely as an argument; but when it does so, it shall find him on his knees.

Q.-M.: I'm afraid that finishes our time for tonight. Next week we shall be discussing the question, *How much can we know about God, and how?* And we shall be able to ask Monsieur Deschamps any further questions then.

# BENET CANFIELD

By

GERARD SITWELL

THE SUBJECT of this article, though his name is now hardly known, had in his own day and for some time later a great reputation as an authority on the spiritual life. He was an eminent exponent of a particular tradition, the tradition of the contemplative life, or as it is often called the mystical way of life, a school of which it might be said that it was concerned only with the attainment of contemplation. The statement as it stands needs some explanation. Contemplation as understood by these authors was recognised as a free gift of God, and it was further recognised that to look for its attainment other than as the culmination of a life of mortification and prayer was to tempt God. The soul must put itself to the best of its ability in the appropriate dispositions, and this it could only do by a strict self-discipline and the cultivation of prayer. Even granted all this a certain natural disposition is still required, and the attempt to cultivate contemplation without this is both unwise and unprofitable. But subject to these provisos the authors of this school did hold that one should directly and consciously aim at the attainment of contemplation. This tradition had a long history, but there is no doubt that it originated in the early monasticism of the fourth and fifth centuries in the Eastern Roman Empire, that it was given its intellectual background in the schools of Alexandria, and that this was at least coloured by Neo-Platonist ideas of contemplation as the end of life. It was not till the high Middle Ages that this spirituality made any considerable impact on Western Europe, but after Thomas Gallus had made the works of pseudo-Denis well known in the first half of the thirteenth century, we find spiritual treatises more and more stressing the attainment of contemplation as the sole end of the spiritual life. The fourteenth-century English mystics came in on the full flood of this movement, which had already swept the Rhineland and the Low Countries, and was later to reach Spain

and France. This spirituality always retained the essential characteristics of the monasticism of the desert, and showed not a little of the Neo-Platonic influences which lay behind it. It is not merely that there was no place for what we call "good works"—active charity for one's neighbour—but the individual was to be sanctified by a programme aimed solely at the attainment of contemplation. Reading, prayer, and meditation was to constitute the activity of the anchoresses for whom most of the treatises were written. If they were obliged to say the Divine Office, that was to have the first call on their time, but the prayer in which the authors were interested started when that was finished. It was indeed the eremitical life for which this spirituality catered, and in which alone it could be fully carried out. It was essentially Christian in as much as it presupposes devotion to Christ and meditation on His life, but this of its nature could not enter into the higher reaches, and though the sacraments and the Mass are, of course, taken for granted, it could not be said that they are put forward as principal means of sanctification.

In the fifteenth century another school of spirituality arose, based on the systematic consideration of the whole scheme of life from a Christian point of view. It began as a means of reform within the religious Orders, and, with the development of the retreat and the method of mental prayer we know as meditation, it became the great instrument of pastoral and missionary activity of the Counter-Reformation. This is the spirituality with which we are familiar, for it is the one which came to predominate, but during the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries the two streams flowed side by side with almost equal force. The reason that the earlier school, which aimed deliberately at the cultivation of contemplation, came to be largely discredited was that certain inherent dangers in it were not sufficiently guarded against, and it was eventually led to the extremes of Quietism. The condemnation of Molinos, however, which marks the final disintegration of this system of piety, did not take place till 1678, and at the period when Benet Canfield was writing, the turn of the sixteenth century, the school which he represented, if it was beginning to be a little suspect in certain quarters, had still great influence.

Such is the background against which Benet Canfield's contribution to spiritual literature needs to be seen, but a word must

be said about the facts of his life and the world in which he lived. He was born in 1561, the son of John Fitch of Canfield in Essex.<sup>1</sup> When he became a Capuchin and took the name of Benet in religion, he was called according to the custom of the Order Benet Canfield, and that is the name by which he is more widely known. In the year 1585, when he was a law student in London, he was converted to the Catholic faith, and it happens that there has come down to us an account of his early life and conversion, which he wrote at the order of his superiors in 1596. It was printed in the 1614 edition of his works, and is generally known as the *Autobiography*. There is no space here to describe his conversion in detail, but the significant thing is that it was in the first place a conversion of life, not a conversion to Catholicism. It was effected by the chance reading of a book, and it had all the symptoms of contemporary religious enthusiasm as manifested among Protestants—fear of hell rather than love of God was the predominating motive. Very soon after this—a matter of days—he began to be tormented with doubts as to whether he should become a Catholic, but it is certain that a general religious conversion took place first and independently. After a further violent emotional crisis, accompanied by prayer, and fasting, and sleeping on the floor, he decided to become a Catholic, and this he believed to be the result of a direct inspiration from God. From the circumstances which he describes it is evident that he was in touch with both Catholics and Puritans before his conversion, and he must almost certainly have had previous thoughts about becoming a Catholic for the issue to have arisen so quickly and in so urgent a form. This enthusiastic conversion accounts no doubt for his going to France within six months in order that he might have the free practice of his religion, though the break with his family evidently did not pass unnoticed. That he should have sought to enter a religious Order was only the logical follow-up of his first conversion, and from the start apparently it was the Franciscans with their ideal of poverty and asceticism who attracted him. That six months after landing he decided to join the Capuchins rather than the Cor-

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Optat de Veghel's book, *Benoit de Canfield: Sa vie, sa doctrine et son influence* (Rome 1949) is invaluable as a well-documented source of facts, but less satisfactory as a commentary on his teaching. All the biographical matter here is taken from it.

deliers, and in March 1587 entered their novitiate, he again attributed to the direct inspiration of God.

He became, then, a Capuchin in the France of 1587. It is worth recalling briefly what this meant. The long drawn-out agony of the Wars of Religion was approaching a paroxysm, but it must be remembered that however great the evils caused by these wars may have been, and they were very great, there was another side to the picture. It was the time when, with the final achievement of the Council of Trent, the tide of the Counter-Reformation was beginning to flow with its full force. Much remained to be done, particularly in France, where the reform of the clergy, which had to be the basis of all reform, had not yet begun, but there was a tremendous enthusiasm among the élite and in joining the Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscans which was practically a new Order and one founded under the influence of the movement for reform, he would encounter that enthusiasm in one of its most vigorous manifestations. This background of intense religious feeling in which he seems to have participated both before and after becoming a Catholic probably largely accounts for his reactions when he entered the religious life, for he appears to have spent half the time in his novitiate in a state that was at least semi-ecstatic. Mystical manifestations of this kind in a modern novice would be highly suspect, and they were in fact of some concern to his brethren, who subjected him to some of the more bizarre medical treatment of the time—freshly killed pigeons were split open and put on his head. This is not the place to attempt any assessment of his early mystical experiences, but that he was directed through them with skill, and that there was underlying them a high degree of grace, is shown by the rapidity with which the physical manifestations were shed, and with which he advanced to a condition in which he was obviously perfectly balanced, and indeed a master in the spiritual life. For it seems that as early as 1592 he had already been ordained priest, had produced the first draft of what was to be his main literary work, *The Rule of Perfection*, and that he had been called in to settle the doubts of Mme Acarie, the remarkable leader of a sort of devout *salon* in Paris, upon the sanctity of whose life the Church was later to set her seal by beatification.

It should perhaps be mentioned that in 1599 Benet Canfield

went to England. The fact of this well-known mystic going on the English mission would have been of great significance, if it were not for the fact that there is more than a little suspicion that he left France because of difficulties with the Parliament of Paris. He was captured immediately on landing, and after spending three years in Wisbech and Framlingham was allowed to return to France.

To turn now to his teaching in *The Rule of Perfection*; the form in which he presents this makes it seem at first sight new and original, but fundamentally it is traditional. He makes the attainment of perfection consist wholly in conformity with the will of God. This of course in a wide sense it does. Sin is sin precisely in so far as it is a voluntary transgression of God's will, and a human life will be perfect in so far as it not only avoids deliberate transgression of this will but is sensitive to its lightest touch. The question is how this will of God is to be known. Canfield divided his book into three Parts in which he treats of what he calls the exterior, the interior, and the essential will of God, and by this he means to indicate three ways in which God's will is manifested to the soul. In the first it will be—though not entirely—by exterior means, in the second by direct inspiration involving a truly contemplative experience, while in the third the soul becomes united with the essential will of God, which, he says, is God Himself. This Part, therefore, is specifically concerned with the highest form of contemplative union. There is, of course, no division in the will of God; the distinctions which Canfield draws are in the various ways in which this will is apprehended by the soul, and even so the distinctions are arbitrary, but that does not detract from their pedagogic value in providing a framework within which the development of the soul can be studied. In effect the first Part is a treatise on mortification, the necessary groundwork of all spiritual life, and Canfield makes it consist solely in the inner conformity of the will, what Augustine Baker called interior as distinct from exterior mortification. This is, of course, the heart of the matter, and Canfield's application of it is searching in the extreme. The second and third Parts deal with the mystical experiences that the soul may expect to undergo as the outcome of the preliminary discipline.

*Part I.* The first stage, then, which he equates with the active life, is one in which the soul learns to conform perfectly to the will of God as manifested exteriorly. That so far as it goes presents no difficulty. The will of God is evidently to be seen in all lawful authority, and this must be obeyed. But in the ordinary business of living our lives we necessarily perform many actions which are neither commanded nor forbidden by any particular decree of authority. Even the religious living under a vow of obedience must have many small personal decisions left to him, but Canfield will not allow these matters which are neither commanded nor forbidden to escape his general rule of doing everything for the will of God, and he lays down minute rules for judging them. Such actions may be either contrary to nature, that is to our natural inclinations or preferences, or they may be according to nature, and the rule is that, if they are contrary to nature we make ourselves do them, and if they are in accordance with our natural inclinations, we deny ourselves and refrain from doing them. The principle involved is simply the necessity of mortifying our fallen human nature, but stated as uncompromisingly as that it is a hard doctrine demanding something like heroic courage, and not to be put in practice without a high degree of grace. He does in fact say that discretion must be used, and if for serious reasons such as health, it is expedient for us to do something that we like or to refrain from something we dislike, then we must act reasonably and it becomes a matter of making a prudent judgment. But even when this test has been applied there is another class of actions which has slipped through the net, actions that in themselves neither attract nor repel us—we are simply indifferent as to whether we perform them or not, or we have no preferences in a choice but must do something. In that case, he says, we just have to come to a reasonable decision, and he gives sensible advice. "Then must hee dispatche and choose the one way or the other, allwayes with the intention above said of the will of God, rather then with distraction and breaking his braines, and losse of tyme, make too long discussion."<sup>1</sup> The important thing is that in these cases we make the

<sup>1</sup> There are two English editions, 1608 and 1609, both published at Rouen. Neither contains the third Part. References here are to the 1609 edition. In 1878 Fr. Collins published an abridgment of the first two Parts together with the treatise on meditation of the Passion.

deliberate intention of acting for the will of God. This must always be done. If, for example, a man is commanded to do something which is congenial to him, he must make the intention of doing it for the will of God, and try to distinguish this motive from the natural pleasure he takes in the action.

He goes on to say that there are six degrees of perfection in carrying out God's will. In the first place the intention must be *actual*, that is we must advert to the fact that we are performing a particular action because it is God's will that we do it. Then there follow: *only*, our intention of performing the action because it is the will of God must exclude all other intentions; *willingly*, the action must be performed whole-heartedly and generously even if it is menial; *assuredly*, with conviction that it really is the will of God, and this, he says, we must judge by an interior discussion; *clearly*, with lively faith to see it as God's will; and *speedily*. The use of these qualifications and the analysis they involve is, of course, good teaching technique, but an over-great preoccupation with them might easily lead to scrupulosity and anxiety. Canfield, however, shows admirable discretion in the way he inculcates the directing of our intention in practice. We must avoid being oblivious of the divine will,

yet to eschew this extremitie of Oblivion, a man must not fall into the contrarie excesse of overmuch Remembrance, in multiplyeng so many acts and rectifieng so often his intention as to trouble the braine. And therefor when I say that a man must direct his intention in all works, I meane not of every little action done by every part and sence of the body or power of the soule, but of such works as are distinguished and separated in them selfes; but particularly and above all, we must not forget those which we feele to please or displease nature very much; for it is thear (as they say) whear the Hare goeth away, and wherein consisteth true advancement.<sup>1</sup>

Of the first degree of intention he says, "a man must not be scrupulous if hee faile in this degree and some others, as though he had committed some synne, seing the desire he hath to practise this Rule doth add no new obligation."<sup>2</sup> That is important advice which ought not to be overlooked.

All this is set out in great detail; difficulties and objections are forestalled and methods proposed, including a sort of examen, by which the practice may be furthered. As has been shown, Benet

<sup>1</sup> p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> p. 58.

Canfield displays a wise discretion in the application of his method, but even so it would require an experienced man to guide himself or anyone else according to such rules. It is not in practice the sort of thing that can be learnt out of a book.

*Part II.* In the first Part the will of God was made known to the soul by exterior means, but at this further stage it is manifested in the interior of the soul itself by "inspirations, illuminations, and the like other attractions of God." Canfield is explicit that this manifestation of Himself to the soul by God should be the outcome of the purity of intention inculcated in the first Part. The cultivation of purity of intention brings about the mortification of the passions and affections of the soul, and this mortification brings a great tranquillity, the tranquillity a profound silence, and in this silence God speaks to the soul.<sup>1</sup> It is the standard teaching of the mystics on the necessity of reducing the soul to a state of passivity. To have this intention of acting only for the will of God means that by a free choice of our will we adhere to what we believe to be God's will quite independently of our natural feelings and desires. By a simple act of the superior part of our will we turn away from creatures and turn towards the Creator, we must "cast our thought and all our spiritual sight on God with all tranquilitie and repose, sweetly, serenely, and without all maner of stresse or violence."<sup>2</sup> All the divisions he makes in his book, the degrees of perfection in carrying out the will of God, the stages by which God manifests Himself to us, are to be transcended in practice. Their purpose is to instruct the beginner and provide an intellectual background. Even if there is turmoil in our lower nature from the passions, and we are harassed by external difficulties, that need not prevent us from adhering peacefully to the will of God, "and this ought to be great comfort, and encouragement to all such as are combated by theyr passions, and agitated with temptations."<sup>3</sup> The result will be this manifestation of God's will. He uses all sorts of metaphors to describe it, seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, but they are all meant to illustrate the soul's reception of an infused knowledge. It is a state which is to permeate the whole of a man's life, and it is clear that he envisages the soul arriving at a fairly advanced stage of contemplation. It would be idle to

<sup>1</sup> p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> p. 135.

attempt to equate this with any of the accepted categories, but he speaks of the soul "hearing his sweet voyce, his delicious and mellifluous speaches unto her," of its "rejoycing in his amorous and alluring aspect, sweet kisses, chaste embracements," and "feeling this efficacious inaction, and lively touch of his good pleasure and will."<sup>1</sup> All this is something to be cultivated; the soul must cut off all superfluity of exterior and interior activity in order that the divine action may be unhindered in it, and if this is done further effects will be produced which he enumerates as admiration, humiliation, exultation, and elevation. Finally at the end of this Part he gives advice on prayer. Here again the only thing to be sought is the will of God, and in particular the soul must guard against desires which are good in themselves, such as to feel fervour, devotion, illumination, etc., but which would hinder the purity of its intention. He gives no detail as to the method of prayer.

*Part III.* The third Part of *The Rule of Perfection* is a treatise concerned entirely with the higher reaches of the mystical life. It is as long as the first two Parts put together and no more can be done here than to give a brief summary with some comment on certain outstanding points.

He makes it clear that by the essential will of God he means God Himself, the Godhead, and it is man's union with this with which he is concerned. He begins by giving what may be called the ordinary teaching on the necessity for avoiding the use of both the imagination and the intellect in the endeavour to reach God. *The Cloud of Unknowing* gives perhaps the classical exposition of this doctrine, and Canfield's teaching agrees with it entirely, but is much less clearly expressed. What has to be achieved is really the concentration of the mind on the simplest idea of God, and Canfield advocates the use of the word *God* or *Essence* as a focus in the same way that the *Cloud* does. This concentration and simplification of the activity of the intellect is all that man can do of himself by way of preparation for the divine action, but it is this latter which Canfield unlike the author of the *Cloud* is interested in. The divine action which may be expected to ensue, for, of course, nothing that man is able to do can ensure it, may, according to Canfield, take place in two ways, or produce a twofold effect. In either case a very high degree of

<sup>1</sup> p. 136.

union will be reached, but the routes are apparently alternative. This is a very curious distinction which Canfield introduces, and it leads to a certain obscurity in his teaching at the start. In one of these ways the soul is entirely passive under the divine action, in the other there are "certain most subtle activities" on its part. The rest of the book is based on this distinction. In chapters 4 to 7 the course of the soul which follows the first way is traced in four stages to a state which seems to be the equivalent of the Spiritual Marriage—a continual awareness of the presence of God. The same end is apparently reached by the alternative route, and its significance will be commented on later. In chapters 8 to 15 he describes the development of the soul which takes the second way, which itself bifurcates into what he calls passive and active annihilation. Chapters 16 to 20 form a sort of appendix on the subject of meditation on the Passion, on which Canfield has a doctrine peculiar to himself among mystical writers. Canfield is discursive, he uses unaccustomed distinctions and terms, and he does not use them consistently. To attempt to reconcile and elucidate every statement in this Part would require a very long and detailed commentary, and it is doubtful if even then the result would be satisfactory. Here it is only possible to draw attention to one or two points.

It was inevitable that at the end of the seventeenth century in the violent reaction against mysticism caused by the condemnation of Molinos, Canfield should have been accused of Quietism, and his work was even condemned, but it is clear that he was far removed from the real Quietist mentality. He makes the point that the discipline of the active life is to be maintained throughout, and this is far from the sort of surrender leading to complete antinomianism which was the real bane of Quietism. He speaks of the soul being passive in the hands of God as all the mystics do, but he is explicit when treating of his first way that this passivity is to wait on the elevation and attraction of God, and that those are deceived who cease from all activity without this—the characteristic error of the Quietists (Chap. 6).<sup>1</sup> The distinction which he makes in the third Part between the two ways in which the soul is united to God is far from being clear. The subtle activities in the soul must be themselves the work of God,

<sup>1</sup> There were many Latin and French editions containing the third Part in the seventeenth century (none since), but they are all hard to come by and I have given only general references to chapters.

for he is insistent that this whole state is far beyond the reach of any human activity, and yet it seems that it is for the soul in some way to make a choice. It shall be for each soul to take up (*assumere*) that which is best suited to it, and the two ways are not to be confused, he says (Chap. 3). When he describes the parallel way in which the soul attains this highest union he introduces an important distinction which is somewhat obscured by his unusual terminology. Within this way, in which, it will be remembered, he speaks of the soul engaging in certain subtle activities, it may achieve either what he calls passive or active annihilation. He uses the word annihilation because the soul is possessed by a profound sense of its own nothingness as compared with God, and of the nothingness of all creatures. Other writers of course use the term to describe this as one of the effects produced by a certain degree of union, but Canfield uses it with the qualifications active and passive to describe two different conditions in which the soul may find itself. Passive annihilation occurs when God actually makes Himself present to the soul in contemplation, and is in effect some kind of ecstasy. But it is his teaching on active annihilation which is of greater interest. In this state the soul is able to contemplate God, or at least to have some sort of continual awareness of His presence, even when engaged in active works. It is the characteristic of St. Teresa's Seventh Mansion, when the soul experiences the so-called Spiritual Marriage, and it is interesting to observe the stress which Canfield lays on this state. Although many of the most famous mystics among the saints had great outward achievement to show for their lives, the mystical or contemplative tradition described at the beginning of this article had no place for such achievement, and so Canfield writing within this tradition, but at the same time as a member of an Order most actively engaged in saving souls, is at pains to point out that the contemplative need not necessarily sacrifice his contemplation if he engages in good works. He condemns those who refuse to take on outward good works on the pretext that these would interfere with their spiritual lives. To the person truly "annihilated" the thing taken on is "nothing" and harmless, and if he refuses, his error involves him in a twofold darkness. The work itself is turned to darkness in the spiritual sense, and his fear engenders a further spiritual darkness of its own.

Finally a word must be said about his teaching that considera-

tion of the Passion of Christ was not to be given up at any stage, even the most advanced, of the mystical life. The way he puts it is that Christ is to be contemplated in His divinity and His humanity together *uno simplici conspectu*. From the way in which Canfield himself goes on to interpret this remark he becomes involved in a dilemma from which there seems to be no escape. The humanity can only be considered by means of images, and for the divinity to be contemplated these must be discarded, so that it seems that a man must, as he says, at the same time receive and reject images. He is content to leave it at that, and say that it is necessary to transcend reason and take refuge in faith (Chap. 17). It is very curious that Canfield should have tied himself up in this dilemma, for it does not seem necessary. The author of the *Cloud* had said that the soul cannot meditate on Our Lord's life during the actual time of the work, as he calls it, of contemplation, but that it must occupy itself with this at other times, and this is the teaching of St. Teresa.<sup>1</sup> But Canfield, who in Chapter 20 refers to St. Teresa in general terms as favouring his thesis—without of course giving a reference—does not seem to have been content with this, and it would seem that he must have had in mind a passage in the same chapter, where she says that in the seventh Mansion the soul never ceases to walk with Christ Our Lord, but is ever in the company of both His human and divine nature. This is evidently a mystical state in which the soul finds itself, and it is not capable of an explanation in terms of ordinary human experience. St. Teresa said that, if she remembered, she would say more about this when she came to write of the seventh Mansion, but unfortunately she forgot! As it is her single sentence is as enlightening as Canfield's five chapters!

*The Rule of Perfection* as a whole is something of a *tour-de-force*. The fact is Canfield was pushing the Dionysian tradition too far and adopting too narrow a conception of it. He was inculcating a direct pursuit of contemplation by what amounted to a technique, but the real end of the Christian life is charity, the love of God and the love of one's neighbour in and for God, and if a sufficiently high degree of this is reached, the soul may well experience the highest union, but the ancient Christian tradition in the West was to wait for this to happen if and when God willed.

<sup>1</sup> *Interior Castle*, Mans. VI, chapter 7.

# THE MORAL ASPECT OF MONOPOLY

By  
**PAUL CRANE**

**T**HE IDEA of a monopolist always has been to sell a little for a lot rather than a lot for a little; and his dream, someone has said rather unkindly, remains that of placing himself eventually in a position whereby he would be enabled to sell an infinitesimally small amount at a price that is infinitely high.

His method, in general, is to control the price of an article and allow the quantity sold to take care of itself, or else to control the quantity sold and allow the price to take care of itself. In particular, he will make use in this country of the practices condemned some years ago in the majority Report of the Monopolies Commission on Collective Discrimination. The general effect of those practices is to hold the price of the article sold by the monopolist higher than that which would prevail in the long run under conditions of fair and reasonable competition. Monopolistic practice thrusts the price of an article above this level, so that the monopolist makes his profit at the expense rather than in the service of the community. The whole point of monopoly is precisely that this should occur.

What of the morality of such a proceeding? It is a thing rarely dealt with in the moral books; but the issue behind it is sufficiently clear to allow one to venture a purely personal judgment as to its moral worth.

The general aim of monopoly, we have just seen, is to thrust the price of an article above that which would prevail in the long run under competitive conditions. This long-run competitive price represents, I would say, the nearest attainable approximation that there is to the ideal of the just price. It does so because the price to which an article is reduced in the long run by the competitive process is that which approximates most closely

to its cost; and equality between price and cost is sought by the type of justice which rules the process of buying and selling and which the schoolmen called commutative. Now, the basic purpose of monopoly practice is to impede the competitive process with a view to holding the price of an article above that long-term level, which represents the nearest approximation there is to a just price. It follows that monopoly practice is immoral in itself because contrary to the demand of commutative justice.

It is with the objective immorality of monopoly that I am here concerned. The formal guilt of the individual monopolist is no business of mine: it depends, obviously, on the extent to which a monopolistic situation is deliberately and knowingly contrived with a view to the perpetration of injustice.

From the above it does not follow that any price higher than the long-term competitive price of an article is contrary to commutative justice. Short-term swings of demand will occur frequently within the framework of a competitive economy, and the higher or lower price to which they lead for a time will stand as just and fair in the short run and until adjustment is made (as it will be made in a competitive economy) to a long-run level. We should never forget that the economic nature of a good is defined not merely by its physical substance, but by the conditions of time and place which are, of its very nature, attached to it and which will serve, at a time of adjustment, to hold the price of an article above or below its long-term level. This can be admitted quite freely and without detriment to my original thesis: it is one thing to take account of scarcity as a determinant of short-term prices; it is quite another deliberately to contrive it with a view to monopoly profit. There is a large amount of relativity in the price system and there is no reason why the just price should be free from it.

It is contrary, also, to social justice, which guards a man's right to the opportunity freely to shape his life by responsible action within the framework of God's Law. As a means essential to this, social justice guards every man's right to a decent sufficiency of this world's goods and gives him, in consequence, a right to work as a means of gaining this sufficiency. But, precisely because it sells too little for too much, monopoly cuts down on the amount that would be produced under competitive

conditions and cuts down, therefore, on the number of jobs open to producers.

Producers are of two sorts, employers and workers. So far as concerns the employer, it follows that, if monopoly is to be successful in restricting the quantity of an article in order that its price may be raised beyond the competitive level, then the number of employers producing that article must also be restricted. Consequently, prospective employer-producers are either forbidden entry into a monopolised line of production or else they are allowed it only on the terms set down by those already in charge of the monopoly. It follows that their field of free choice and so their opportunity of acting responsibly is cut down in very much the same way that it would be by a socialising government which took charge of and controlled industrial production out of misplaced humanitarian motives. Socialisation is to be condemned as inimical to individual opportunity. We condemn monopolised industry on exactly the same grounds. The difference between the two of them is primarily one of degree and not of kind.

So far as concerns the worker-producer, there is no need to labour the point that, under monopolistic conditions, he suffers a constriction of basic opportunity very similar to that put on the employer-producer. For, if the latter cannot get into a line of production or trade and set up a business or factory, the worker's opportunity of employment, which depends on his chance of doing so, is thereby limited as well.

Precisely because it sells too little for too much, monopoly cuts down on the amount that would be produced under competitive conditions, and cuts down, in consequence, on the number of jobs available to producers, whether they be workers or employers. It restricts unduly the scope of a man's right to work and cramps thereby his opportunity of shaping his life as a free man should. That is the first way in which monopoly practice offends against social justice.

It does so, secondly, by breeding economic stagnation. For the effect of monopoly is to eradicate competition and so to slow down to a sluggish crawl that process of progressive industrial change on which the maintenance and improvement of a country's standard of living so largely depends. As a result, too few goods are produced and many are deprived of that

sufficiency which is theirs by right. We have seen already that, under monopoly practice, the prices of goods sold are higher than they should be. This is contrary to commutative justice. We note now the additional fact that, under monopolistic conditions, too few goods are produced. This is contrary to social justice. This denial of a sufficiency to so many in the community is carried out by those who, through the toleration of monopoly practice, are allowed to gain their livelihood at the expense of the community instead of being forced by the competitive spur to seek their living in its service.

At this stage, it is only fair to add that trade unionism in Britain today aims monopolistically to manipulate the supply of labour to industry with a view to raising its price in the same way that employers aim to raise the prices of the goods they sell. Trade unionism does this mainly by using its power to threaten a withdrawal of labour through strike action, by restrictive agreements of one sort and another and, very often at the level of the shop-floor, by the kind of pressure which makes it impossible for a man to work beyond a certain pace. This last is often reinforced by a closed-shop policy, which makes expulsion from the union and consequent loss of his job the penalty for a worker who goes contrary to shop-floor sentiment in the matter of working methods and hours. The whole is aggravated by the interruption to the smooth flow of work which comes when members of several craft unions engaged in the same job divide up the minutiae of its operations amongst themselves. What this means so often for the men on the factory floor is the prevalence there of restrictive practices which have an obviously deleterious effect on the supply and quality of hours of work done and, in consequence, on the output of goods and their prices. I do not think any fair-minded view of current trade union practice in Britain today would deny any part of the above.

Here, no more than in the case of the business community, am I interested in apportioning blame. All I want to do is to indicate that monopolistic practices exist in the trade union work and to say that they are objectively immoral to the extent that, under them, the individual citizen's right of legitimate free action is constricted in much the same way that it is under business monopoly. For, in the first place, the worker who is

submitted to restrictive practices on the factory floor and who works in an atmosphere that is inimical to effort, has his field of choice cut down and his opportunity of responsible action thereby considerably curtailed; his hours of work and, in consequence, his earnings are also less than they would be. Moreover, his self-reliance is weakened as he is made to feel increasingly that the proper posture for him is to be one of the crowd, to follow the pace of the slowest and not to set to others an example of hard work. His opportunity of acting responsibly and his livelihood are struck at by these proceedings, which offend against social justice.

In the second place, the effect of monopolistic control by the unions over the labour supply is to thrust wages up beyond the level marked by increases in the workers' productivity. At any level beyond that represented by a family living wage, this means the taking by labour of a monopoly profit which is gained at the expense of the community and not—as would be the case were wage increases matched by a corresponding increase in productivity—in its service. Consequently, there is a reflection of these too high wages in the already too high prices brought about by the depredations of business monopoly. The consumer, therefore, is dealt a double blow: his real income is constricted further than it might be and his field of choice and opportunity of responsible action further curtailed. Increasingly, he feels himself a proletarian in this sense, that the level of his real income and his opportunity of spending it as he wants, both depend on the interplay of the twin, monopolistic and impersonal forces of big business and big unionism, which seem quite beyond his control.

# AFTER BATTLE

By

GEORGE SCOTT-MONCRIEFF

“**D**ONE is a battel on the dragon blak” is the opening of William Dunbar’s Easter hymn. We may have echoed these words in applying them to a conflict central to our own lives. But with us the battle is never really done on this side of the grave. Decisive conflict is followed by a long period of attrition. Our wills are still divided. Ananias-like we hold back part of our promise. We accept God’s service, but with many reservations. We cannot immediately accord Him the complete renunciation that, we know, is asked of us. Indeed, it would generally be hypocritical for us to presume to do so, for our wills are as yet little attuned to God, and a show of complete meekness in His service would be false, a mere mask behind which ill-will can fester until it poisons us all over again. The world has seen countless examples of those who, having been granted a genuine revelation, have then assumed a righteousness they did not possess and had not merited, abrogating to themselves that to which they had no claim with a pride which even if agonised was still pride. These people only confound and bring discredit upon their creed. If we would consider how much was to be effected in us we should appreciate that the process of attrition had to be a slow one, taking, it may be,

of years a score,  
Though maybe less, yet maybe more.

Perhaps the long afternoon of our lives does not seem very attractive. The wonderful dewy innocence of the early morning has gone. Even the heat and clangour of noonday had a militant attraction, an excitement not so readily discerned in its aftermath. Much passion has been spent. We waver between desire for a siesta and an anxious hope that we may still recapture some of the pleasures of earlier hours, alternately wanting to take things

easily and then again wishing to prove to ourselves that life is still as it was before. But there is no time to rest, and life is not as it was before. Instead we have to start on this long phase in which our adhesions to ourselves and to the things of this world have to be broken, one by one. Perhaps in our enthusiasm we hope that the process can be achieved in one *coup*, and the initial gesture of conversion achieve in us the dissolution of all our faults. This is the seed of the parable springing up too hopefully from shallow soil: the premature corn withers quickly beneath the elements. Or that process we have already mentioned takes places in us: our piety shot through with pride becomes cant and humbug. Most of us suffer some taste of many misleading processes in ourselves. Spiritual pride and self-righteousness can only be escaped by an apprehension of the great paradox of the life of the spirit: there is a sense in which we can do nothing of ourselves, and again there is a great deal that we have to do.

The secret of our lives that we can never fully comprehend is the action of the grace of God. Since God is all goodness it is plain that man can do nothing good that is not of God. The grace is given to him, yet it is not his. He cannot appropriate it for his own ends. It is easy to see that a man thinking his goodness his own must fall into pride. Many people are conscious of this, finding it difficult to see any way out of the dilemma. Cynics sometimes argue that no man acts but for his own ends, only the ends vary. But this is an over-simplification, an intellectual abstraction that our hearts tell us cannot be true. Its rebuttal may be most clearly seen in the man who habitually allows God to act in him. God acts in all of us intermittently, and of course even in full revolt we can achieve nothing without His permissive will: but with most of us His direct action is much contaminated by our own desires and prejudices. How often have we done the right thing apparently for the wrong reasons? Or done it grudgingly, with distaste, making charity subservient to pride and losing for ourselves so much of the offered grace?

Recognition of the part that grace plays in our lives is a tremen-

dous liberation from vanity and from our very selves. Our own contribution, what we have to do to be its ready accomplice, seems an increasingly negative part. Where formerly we had the sense of striving to make ourselves act aright, in the time of attrition we appear only to be holding ourselves back from doing wrong. Nor is it only the evil things we have to deny ourselves. Many things lawful in themselves become wrong for us, things that might formerly have been virtuous in us have to be renounced—renounced not for any suggestion of inherent evil but because they constitute adhesions that divert us from the course that has become central in our lives. This wearing away of our commonplace selves gives us no sense of heroism, yet it is part and parcel in importance with any more dramatic decision that may have preceded it. It is as vital a period of our lives as any, even when it seems, as it so often does, dark and profitless. We are chiefly conscious of lack of heroism as we find ourselves imploring God to leave us this, that, or the next conceit. We seem to give nothing until it is forced from us. We sulk in our resentment at the loss of so much that is pleasant and gratifying. We argue and demur. Often we cling tenaciously to the worldly things we love, cling long after we have lost our taste for them, cling desperately because they present us with a known world and we are intimidated at the prospect of a world without familiar supports. Our whole conduct seems pusillanimous. It is hard to be convinced that after all our goal will not prove a mirage.

God makes many allowances, and grants us compromise. If we could see at first all that the implementing of our victory entailed, few of us would face so Pyrrhic a diet. It is only stage by stage, phase by phase, that the completeness of God's demand upon us becomes clearer. He extorts nothing from us, but He helps, by many solaces, our free will to make its cumulative concessions, only revealing to us His next demand when we are able to accept it—although, indeed, to us His demands may constantly seem premature, but He knows our strength better than we know it ourselves. Sometimes when we show ourselves apparently incurably unable to relinquish some prop of comfort or conceit, God seems to let us keep it. Only it remains

in the nature of a crutch, and we remain lame in its use until, if ever on this side of death, we have the courage to cast it from us, the assurance to find that we are not lame, the faith to be made whole in God. So long as we remain dependent upon our crutch our progress is inevitably slower, indeed its very potential in this world is limited. Even although we know that God asks all before He can give all, we are for long reluctant to admit what this must mean—what a stripping, what a beggaring, what a humbling. Only slowly and painfully do we appreciate that it is no flight of religious rhetoric but a fundamental condition for the consummation of our being in God. This side of eternity it is never complete, but that does not gainsay the injunction, *Estote perfecti.*

Of course we may not have appreciated it then, but while we were young the most decisive outside influence for our good was the company of good people. Although His presence informs us, we first get to know God through other persons. In them we see externalised what is implicit in ourselves, we see it made objective and given a place against the setting of the world we live in. The impact made on us in our youth by selfless people may prove decisive at a later stage of our lives when there is posed to us the question of the very practicability of selflessness. Yet most of us have seen in others at least something of the capacity for self-sacrifice, not stressed nor claimed but simply active in everyday life. Later we come to see that a man's intellectual opinions are remarkably unimportant compared with the actual motive force by which he lives. We find paradoxically often that persons whose ideas may be strange and untenable, or merely extremely simple and limited, inherited or adopted by whimsy of circumstance, often seem themselves to live by canons more enlightened than those that motivate other persons apparently more clear-sighted and logical in their thought. Of course sound thinking is an asset to any man, but it does not seem to provide his only, or even his main motivation. We gradually apprehend in humankind an intuitive capacity scarcely expressible by the individual, by which a man may live far more wisely than his thought might seem to warrant.

Of our intuitive faculty we know little save how impossible it is to define or calculate it in rational terms. This is less surprising than it might seem, for after all it is a supra-rational faculty. As such it is in itself neither good nor evil but, like our other faculties, while potentially a means to good, also capable of being abused. We know that to some degree it is a faculty that has tended to atrophy through diminished use in those societies that are most deeply involved in our highly cerebral and materialist civilisation. We know that it inclines to play a stronger part in the lives of women than of men. We have seen it manifest although abused, sometimes even diabolically possessed, in fortune-tellers and spiritualistic mediums. We know that only the most narrowly academic minds would attempt to inhibit it in rational terms; such minds have, in effect, implicitly denied before they started to discuss the existence of that which they claim to study. Indeed, most of those who may have started sternly rationalistic in their approach to life tend to find themselves, if they are to grow in wisdom at all, relying increasingly upon and trusting, the faculty of intuition, without any longer demanding rational evidence of its *bona fides*. After all, much of the substance of our lives, even our common feelings and emotions, are little less elusive, little more to be evoked except by symbol and analogy, than is our intuition.

The reasons people give for their actions may be quite unconvincing. Often they are merely seeking, more or less consciously, to justify appetites or desires or prejudices of which they are ashamed. But sometimes again their motives seem to be better, more apt and disinterested, than the reasons they adduce. Then there are the people who make very little show of explaining why they do anything, and yet act more sensibly and rightly than any of us, sometimes with a seemingly premonitory sense of what the situation requires. Whatever may underlie premonition, it is certainly better that we should make use of it not to set ourselves up as prophets or soothsayers but as a silent guide to our charity, not as the inspiration of words but of deeds. These inspirations come through our unconscious mind, of whose action only the most superficial aspects are capable of analysis. These superficial aspects provide the material for the various

schools of psychological theory so clamant today. Their practitioners are concerned with the flaws of the human psyche, especially the pathological distortions caused by grave mental wounds and disturbances. These same flaws cause weaknesses that the devil is particularly quick to exploit, therefore their treatment, when it is necessary, should only be entrusted to men with the integrity of faith. But while both devil and doctor can deal, after their respective ways, with the ills of the unconscious part of the mind, both are at a loss when it comes to dealing with it in its strength and wholeness. Our bad motives can always be analysed, for the devil can only work in us by circumlocution, something capable of being unravelled: our best motives can never be analysed, for God works in us directly. The furthest we can reach in the analysis of a man's best motive is to say that he is doing the will of God. Beyond that we can only presume to analyse the Creator's intentions. While it would certainly be wrong to suppose that sanctity demands psychological wholeness, it is plainly true that good people provide far less satisfactory material for the analyst than bad people. Bad motives always proffer the richest meat for the imaginations of biographer and novelist.

We come on to dangerous ground when we attempt in any way to define or plot the will of God. History is full of characters who have claimed to proclaim it, who have insisted that deeds bloody, or merely wilful and obtuse, were done at the behest of the holy will. No doubt there is no aberration of human conduct that has not at one time or another been claimed as the manifestation of the will of God. But, just as the mere fact that countless persons have falsely or mistakenly declared that their actions were inspired by their love for another does not mean that nobody has ever been inspired by a genuine love—in fact the claim is only effective because it is known that it can be true—so these myriad abuses do not mean that nobody has ever lived in accord with the will of God but rather that we have an abiding certitude that it is possible to do so. To encounter truly godly people is a great blessing and a rare stimulus. Even a fleeting contact with one such person may act profoundly upon us. But we come increasingly to realise that the same

demand is made upon ourselves: *estote perfecti*, abide by the will of God. Sometimes we see in very young and seemingly inexperienced people an unmistakable aptitude for acting within and abiding by the will of God. Perhaps we ourselves only slowly, belatedly, find out what has kept us back from a service which is not so much a service in the sense of fulfilling commands and regulations, but rather the spontaneous acceptance of a living will beyond our own. The cataclysm of guilt, original and acquired, has destroyed the integrity of our nature. We are moved by appetites, fears, desires, ambitions, hither and thither: the true line of our lives is lost. Plainly it may take us many years, perhaps the better part of our lives, to renounce and eliminate these influences within ourselves that separate us from immediate contact with God's will. We have to accept the letter of the law as a necessary discipline because we have lost our affinity with the spirit "which alone giveth life." We have to go beyond the minimal demands of the letter, renouncing even what may be perfectly lawful in itself in order that all those aspirations that we have allowed to become excessive in our lives may be quelled until they are no longer dominant, and we no longer their helpless victims. That is the activity of the long afternoon, or of those "dark nights" so incomparably described by St. John of the Cross.

God's will: how are we to find it and to know it when we do find it? Our intellects of themselves can only take us so far. By them, with our own willing collaboration, we accept the moral law. But just as in our relationships with our fellow creatures, when these are intimate and based upon a mutual trust, a stage is reached when the importance of requests and words and definitions diminishes because some kind of communion of will has been achieved, so much more in any mature relationship with God the spirit comes to replace the law. Not one jot nor tittle of the law shall be altered, yet we are mysteriously released from its dominion by the infusion of grace. The law is no longer our chief guide, we have passed from the knowledge of the abstract of God to a knowledge of the person of God. Henceforth our relationship becomes increasingly a personal one, proving itself in love instead of in laws. Of course in this

world we are always to some degree subject to our own desires, and therefore to the laws that must curb them, but that does not prevent many people from reaching a point at which these desires are practically consistently overridden by their compliance with God's intention, so that we may say of them that they live by the will of God. This never justifies self-righteousness, nor a sense of being impeccable: for that would be presumption of a kind foreign to the natures of these people. Nor does it give them any claim to omniscience. They do not share God's knowledge of the future, nor even of His future intentions for themselves. Here we may recall an observation of Abbot Chapman, who said that while it was always impossible to know what God might wish us to do tomorrow, or even two minutes hence, we could live in such a way as to apprehend God's will for us at each moment of time as it came. This is implied when we are told to take no heed for the morrow: it does not of course preclude preparation for tomorrow, but it is a happy acceptance that whatever plans or preparations we may make are the work of this moment only, perhaps not to be fulfilled in any way that we might anticipate, yet still justified in the divine purpose. It is truly to live in "the sacrament of the present moment."

As the afternoon of our lives wears on we suffer a disturbing sense of a loss of virtue instead of the sense of gain for which we had hoped. The reason is simple. Formerly we lived, at least as far as we were aware, by our own wills. Now we have begun to renounce our own will and willingly to accept that of God. Before, an act of virtue in us was something of which we were perhaps acutely conscious, and even anxious that it should be recognised. But now we are becoming mercifully less conscious of ourselves, we are being preserved from the fallacy of pride by the knowledge that it is indeed God who acts through us, that charity is His, not ours. When we see marked selflessness in younger people we are often inclined to assume that they have not had to contend with the same difficulties of personality and circumstance that afflict us. But we do not know what heroic conflicts they may have joined and won before they reached the degree of self-forgetting that seems so natural in them. So with ourselves, the conflict is an inner one, the dispo-

sition has been reached perhaps long before it is revealed in our actions. The day comes when we are glad of the humiliations and contradictions that once distressed us inordinately. We are glad of them because they reveal to us the flaws that persist in our characters. We no longer see them as unfortunate contretemps, but as welcome, if humbling, revelations. We know that we would not have committed the particular act whose public manifestation has shamed us had the disposition not already existed within us. We begin to realise how constant is God's demand upon us: that goodness is a matter of disposition rather than deeds. For now what we do is God's concern: what we are depends upon our collaboration. The afternoon is a process of becoming rather than doing. That is one reason why it often seems so frustrating and pointless, because interior change only takes place very slowly, and generally undramatically.

Prayer becomes our constant concern: prayer of all kinds, public and private, liturgical and silent. Often for long periods it is dry and seemingly pushed up against a blank wall. But there are moments when the wall breaks away, giving place to an incredible refreshment of communion. We realise suddenly that only in prayer can our communication be utterly unself-conscious, only to God can we speak without any shadow of pretence or temptation to conceal, because neither pretence nor concealment can have any place in that relationship. Prayer is not an occasion for wrestling but for the uttermost relaxation: there is even a purely physical aspect involved in this, as has long been recognised in the East. All tension of body and mind must be dropped, shed like the clothes we take off at night, so that the spirit may be freed. This is why it is important not to worry about the multitudinous distractions that flow through our minds, not to pursue them or be exasperated, but simply to hope that these butterflies of the imagination will drift their own course out of our consciousness. Progress in prayer commonly seems the slowest thing we have ever known. Its step is unhurried and imperceptible. Often, even, we seem to have gone backwards. Degrees of concentration that once excited us, becoming habitual appear to us so inadequate as to be worthless. Yet

their worth is all the time making its mark in our lives, and it is partly the very merit of looking less at ourselves that conceals our growth from us. "Know thyself" is a maxim popular today. But there is paradox at the heart of all important truths, so that they need comprehension and not merely to be learnt by rote. To know oneself is needful for psychological wholeness, but even before that can be reached we need to begin to learn its antithesis, the "seek to be unknown to others and to yourself" of St. John of the Cross. That is to make God truly our confidant.

Prayer comes to involve a great unknowing of self, a primary element of that total "cloud of unknowing" of the old English mystic. When we are children it is enough to ask for a new bicycle, for then we can often only define God's gifts in such concrete terms. Gradually we learn how little we know of our own needs and our prayer becomes less and less one of petition: the bicycle of our request becomes a mere symbol, until we can hardly speak of it but rather pray undefinedly for God's will to be done in us. Prayer is described as a lifting up of mind and heart to God. The mind often seems to stay stuck in the mud of preoccupying thought, yet the heart may rise for all our earthbound imaginations. The heart is the more important to God, for essentially it is the will, although if the mind can disentangle itself its freedom is a great refreshment to us as it gazes unknowingly into the mystery at the heart of creation. There are great souls, some of them canonised and celebrated, most of them as happily unknown to the world, who have learnt to live in a state of prayer. This does not mean that they physically lived on their knees. On their part it means that they have cut through those adhesions to created things that frankle most of us. This might sound just a chilling and negative act, but that is only because we find it hard to apprehend the unseen side of it, the grace of God that is given to them, more heart-warming than all the graces of the world. That is where there is something false and misleading about all moralising and moral-teaching. It is easy to tell people what they should do and what they must not do: and sometimes it is not even difficult to tell them aright. But what we cannot reveal is the other side, God's part in our right-doing. Here, again, comparison may

be made with human love. How little we can ever say of what succour a deep love has meant to us. Few of us would even try to say much of our most intimate and perfect relationships, but content ourselves with quite superficial statements. It is far more the case with our love of God. How can we hope to express the reality of that relationship armed only with a little glossary of superlatives and ejaculations? Only sometimes poets and mystics evoke hints of God's love. Holy people express it best, but they do so less in words than in a stillness of presence that catches a reflection of the invisible glory.

When we see that all the graces of the world, the good of all the things that we have loved, reside in God, the idea of renouncing the world is no longer an arbitrary command, a puritanical counsel of defeat, but simply the perfect giving of love and its consummation in the person of love. Just as it is persons who most enrich our worldly life, so again it is a person in whom our love is at last purified and made perfect. God is a Father and a Son as well as a Holy Spirit. We know Him better in people than in ideas, and we know Him best in His own person, not in our ethical concepts. We find a hint of the sublimity of love even in the love of our fellow creatures, that realisation that it can touch the boundless and the eternal, aspiring far beyond our present reach. All the symbols and the fumbling analogies that we make to define God and make Him assimilable to our minds drop away at last, even in this life, in prayer, and we in our feebleness touch absolution.

## REVIEWS

### A RE-EXAMINATION

*The Generalship of Alexander the Great*, by Maj.-Gen. J. F. C. Fuller, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O. (Eyre and Spottiswoode 35s).

THE AUTHOR of this book is, first and foremost, a soldier, and it is with Alexander the strategist and commander, as the title suggests, that he is primarily concerned. To attempt to deal in detail with campaigns and battles which took place over two thousand years ago might seem, to many, to be a hopeless task. But this is not so.

Thanks in the first place to the classical histories of Arrian, Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Curtius and others, and, in the second, to the modern topographical researches of such travellers as Aurel Stein, it is possible, as General Fuller triumphantly shows, to reconstruct, "on the method of inherent probabilities," what actually happened. The result is a series of absorbingly interesting descriptions, not only of Alexander's four major victories, but also of the various sieges and smaller-scale campaigns that he undertook in the course of his twelve-year reign. These descriptions are illustrated by excellent sketch-maps (there are also four air-photographs of lesser value) and one is tempted—but it is a temptation which in this instance must be resisted—to discuss them in greater detail. Let it suffice to say that General Fuller, who shares Napoleon's view of his hero's genius both as Captain and Administrator, makes out a most compelling case in his favour. As a soldier, moreover, he is able to shed light on a number of incidental, but nevertheless fascinating, matters by the way. He points out, for instance, that the individual duels which the classical historians depicted as taking place between the heroes or protagonists on either side in a battle were not put in merely in order to heighten the dramatic effect. On the contrary, they were *the* decisive incident in the battle; for once the leader was slain, as often as not his army disintegrated and the battle was won. Alexander himself, always in the thick of the fight, was wounded no less than eight times in the course of his campaigns. Then there is his extraordinary feat at the Hydaspes, where in something under fifteen hours he managed to put across the river and disembark a force of 5,000 cavalry and 10,000 infantry. How was it possible, we may well ask, in the short time available beforehand to collect and construct a sufficient number of craft for the purpose? In a footnote the author reminds us that the disembarkation of William of Normandy's 2,000 knights and their horses and 3,000 infantry at Pevensey in 1066 took twelve hours, while in 1415 "Henry V spent three August days in disembarking 8–10,000 men at Harfleur." It is also not without interest that we learn that Alexander was the first to use the catapult, hitherto a siege weapon only, as field artillery.

But no less interesting are the views here expressed on Alexander as a statesman, his attitude towards world-government and his treatment of subject nations. Whether, in fact, his views on *Homonoia* or the brotherhood of man can be taken as having any real connection with the Christian concept as later revealed is open to question. It may be so. But it is a perpetual temptation, of which the historian must at all times beware, to read contemporary meaning into past utterance. What was in Alexander's mind, conditioned by stranger influences than we know, we are unlikely to be able with any certainty to inter-

pret. It is another matter, however, when we come to the methods he employed in laying the foundations of his empire. And these were twofold in character, comprising on the one hand the exploitation of divisions in the enemy camp before conquest, and, in general, great tolerance towards the defeated foe afterwards. The value of the first of these two policies he had learnt from his father; that of the second he discovered himself. It is easy to see the lessons which might be drawn, and which here are drawn, from all this. Had Hitler, for example, followed Alexandrian precedent and treated the subjugated Russians with clemency instead of ferocity, there is little doubt that he would have overthrown Stalin's empire. Had the British and the Americans, instead of adopting the suicidal policy of "Unconditional Surrender," attempted to exploit the anti-Nazi elements inside Germany, there is good reason to believe that the war could have been won a great deal earlier than it was. In support of which the author quotes a striking passage from Goebbel's Diaries which adds unexpected weight to this conjecture. In fact there is plainly a great deal of truth in Sir Richard Livingstone's remark, likewise appositely quoted here: "If the Twentieth Century searched through the past for its nearest spiritual kin, it is in the fifth and following centuries before Christ that they would be found."

Wherein is likewise to be found an important justification, if indeed any such were required, for this excellent book.

JOHN McEWEN

#### A MONUMENT TO THE TATE GALLERY

*The Tate Gallery*, by Sir John Rothenstein (Thames and Hudson £6 6s).

THE MULTIPLICITY of expensive art-books that offer coloured reproductions of paintings and an accompanying text purporting to elucidate them is a post-war phenomenon that exasperates most critics. And not unreasonably: the books carry an air of luxury and *chic*, of timeless culture without tears, that over-lays their subject-matter like coats of glossy varnish; reproductions are usually indifferent or bad, and texts are quite often both inapposite and as near meaningless as makes no difference.

The present volume on the Tate Gallery is a most distinguished exception to a still too dismal rule. The sixty-eight tipped-on colour plates are, almost without exception, of high quality, and there are thirty-nine in photogravure; the photography of the sculpture, done by Mr. F. L. Kenett, is a quite outstanding performance.

The selection of the plates was made, not as usually happens (to the critic's irritation) by the publisher, but by the author. Sir John

Rothenstein accompanies each plate with a short, down-to-earth, lucid commentary—the writing has the merit, rare in this genre, of being consistently intelligible—grinding no axes, catholic in his appreciations, free of slogans and current cant: temperate, informed, exceedingly wise. His introduction, too, though some passages are necessarily tempered with discretion, is a fascinating narrative which contains, especially in its first half, much hitherto unpublished or forgotten material on the history and many vicissitudes of the Tate Gallery. Written with characteristic urbanity and modesty—after all, the Tate Gallery as it appears today is largely the work of the present Director—it is informative and balanced, restrained but often amusing, enlivened by many a telling detail.

Indeed, if a critic must have his grumble, it would be that the publishers have given their readers too many pages that allow too little of Sir John and too much of ill-organised and inconsistent, ugly and pretentious-looking, empty space. A second, lesser grumble: the Picasso *Femme Assise* of 1923, on the front dust-cover, is beyond doubt an excellent picture for this purpose. But it is, in itself, comparatively dull. Given the richness of the Tate's collections, is it good enough to merit a second reproduction within the book? But perhaps there was a hitch here; the commentary on it would appear to have initially envisaged Picasso's (analytical cubist) *Femme nue Assise* of 1909, acquired in 1949 and a far more interesting and beautiful work, which is not, however, reproduced.

But a few blemishes of layout notwithstanding, the volume is a splendid monument to a remarkable Gallery—and also to private enterprise. For such as the Tate Gallery is, it had no public money at its disposal for acquisitions until after the Second World War; its Grant-in-Aid remains excessively meagre and it is still private munificence and enterprise on which its purchasing policy largely subsists. Since the time of writing a considerable alleviation of this state of affairs has been announced (23 January last) in the House of Commons.

VINCENT TURNER

#### THE 'ABBEY'

*The Abbey Theatre*, by Gerard Fay (Hollis and Carter 21s).

IT SEEMS as if the spate of books inspired by the burnt-out Abbey Theatre in Dublin will never abate. Stephen Gwynn, Una Ellis Fermor, and the late ethereal Lennox Robinson have written full histories, and the Journals of Lady Gregory give her side of the story; but Mr. Gerard Fay, London editor of *The Manchester Guardian* and son of Frank Fay who, with his brother Willie, founded the tradition of Abbey Theatre acting, has much to say that is new and exciting. He writes

objectively, although he might be presumed to be specially *parti pris* in the controversies which concerned his father and uncle. He has delved in the newspaper files, and has the reporter's gift for picking on the salient sentences for quotation. What more thrilling indictment of Miss Horniman, the Lady Bountiful of the Abbey, as Lady Gregory was its "charwoman," than her letter to Yeats: "You are ceaselessly victimised by Lady Gregory on the score of your gratitude for her kindness. You are being made a slave. Your genius is put under a net in that precious 'garden' and you are only let out when you are wanted to get something out of *me*." Yeats might well have echoed the sentiments of Synge's Christy Mahon, "It's great luck and company I've won me in the end of time—two fine women fighting for the likes of *me*," had Yeats not given his heart to Maude Gonne, who preferred the down-to-earthness of Major MacBride; but the world owes as much to his female Maecenases as it does to the first Kathleen Ni Houlihan.

Mr. Gerard Fay uses his journalistic training to particularly good purpose when he describes the battle of *The Playboy*, and quotes the amazing dictum of *The Freeman's Journal*: "The hideous caricature would be slanderous of a Kaffir kraal. The piece is announced to run for a week: it is to be hoped it will be instantly withdrawn," and Lady Gregory's telegram to the absent Yeats: "Audience broke up in disorder at the word shift." Nationalists sang *God save Ireland* while Trinity undergraduates sang *God save the Queen*, and not a word of Synge's play was heard in the police-controlled theatre from Tuesday until Saturday; but the show went on! Truly they were Giants on the Abbey stage in those days, and Willie Fay, who faced the audience across the footlights to demand a hearing for those who had paid to hear the play, deserved the Hibernian Order of Merit, if there had been such appendage, for his courage under great provocation—or perhaps a statue in O'Connell Street.

The reviewer once saw Willie Fay play Martin Doul in *The Well of the Saints*: he was then a very old man, but one could see how his example was the inspiration of all that was best in the Abbey tradition. Frank Fay he saw only in *A Royal Divorce* in 1924, but the voice and the dignity of the player were equalled only in his experience by those of the late F. J. McCormick. Lennox Robinson, whom Mr. Gerard Fay salutes as "father" of the Abbey Theatre, has gone his ways too since this book appeared for review, and few remain of the stalwarts of the old Abbey Theatre. It is good to welcome a tribute to the founders of the Irish National Theatre's acting tradition which makes up by its lively interest for what it lacks in style of presentation. One laments with Mr. Fay for the loss of the hat-box containing many letters from Yeats and his "Annie" which disappeared from the

coal-cellar in Mount Street after it had excited the suspicions of the Black and Tans in their raids because it was difficult to open.

WULSTAN PHILLIPSON

### THE SENSE OF HISTORY

*The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, by Jean Daniélou, S.J. Translated by Nigel Abercrombie (Longmans 30s).

WE CAN always count on rich and varied fare in a book by Père Daniélou. And we are not altogether disappointed here. Witness a sentence such as this: "The earliest Christian heresies can be regarded, for the most part, as a sort of revenge taken by the Greek language for the efforts made to force it to describe new things." He surveys the various, often contradictory, estimates of the meaning of "history" current today, and shows the irreplaceable function played even in "profane" history by the realities of "sacred history." This leads on to a study of sacred history itself and of its most characteristic feature, typology—which runs through the Old Testament and finds its chief realisation in the New. But the "typology" is not exhausted there: God's great acts on behalf of his chosen people prefigured not only the coming of Christ but also the life of his Church in the midst of the world, and the Church's ultimate salvation in the eschatological consummation. The Fathers were only developing what was already in the New Testament when they saw in Baptism the real counterpart of the crossing of the Red Sea. The Israelites "were like an army driven back upon the coast, due to be cut to pieces or taken prisoner. . . It was just when they were finally incapable of saving themselves that the power of Almighty God brought to pass that which was humanly impossible." That the Fathers saw in this, as indeed the liturgy still does today, a type of the soul's situation at the moment of Baptism, when "the impassable barrier crumbles away and opens a practicable breach," tells us unmistakably what the Church has always thought of man's desperate straits and of the true miracle worked at each passing through the waters of Baptism. Yet how casual we are about it.

Let this stand as an example of the richness of fare presented in this volume. Yet there are many things which one regrets too. Most of the later conferences in it have but the loosest connection with the main theme: they provide, if you will, variety and may appeal to some palates, but most readers will find them insipid. There is, too, evidence of carelessness, as for instance when we are given a good quotation on the defeat of the devil at Baptism, without being told that it is taken from St. Cyprian. Frequently a merely verbal use of

Scripture replaces its true meaning—pardonable accommodations in a preacher, but not in a work professing to give “the Inner Meaning of History.” Indeed, who has ever before interpreted “. . . and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be” as a warning that what we now possess “is something we can lose”? And C. H. Dodd is not an Anglican.

We are grateful that the translation reads easily, even if French phraseology still protrudes not infrequently. The only serious mistake noticed is the description of Eutychianism as having “obscured the permanent distinction of two kinds”—where it should obviously be “the two natures” in Christ. And, really, either Elias or Elijah, but not both on the same page! However, we can forgive the translator much because of the creation of a new, resounding epithet: “the Harnackite liberals.”

MAURICE BÉVENOT

### JESUITS IN GEORGETOWN

*Georgetown University: Origin and Early Years*, by John M. Daley, S.J. (Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C. n.p.).

ON THE FINEST SPOT overlooking the Potomac, commanding Georgetown and suburban to Washington, rises the ancient Jesuit College founded by Archbishop Carroll, himself the first Primate of the American Hierarchy.

From its own Press appears its early history and struggles. The American Jesuits had to face the difficulties of the suppression and later the transition from the British Monarchy to the Republic.

“Stress and strain” covers more than one chapter, but the Society rallied with patience. Carroll belonged to the family of one of the Signers and wrote that “many seminaries of education have been raised in the United States within these few years, but in general they are exceedingly defective in discipline.” This was written in 1790, but it might be quoted in the present America where the school question has reached crisis upon crisis for the same reason.

At least the Jesuit universities and colleges spread a chain of discipline through the immense continent. Georgetown accompanied the history of the new republic. Fr. Grassi the Second Founder was in charge during the war of 1812, and witnessed the burning of the Capitol by the British troops.

In its fiftieth year, 1842, the special Ode was composed by Custis, “the last male survivor of Washington’s domestic family,” and sung by Miss Carroll, a granddaughter of the Signer. With this link from the past the modern history of the college begins.

To a visitor it presents a scene of immense industry. There is an

entire public hospital attached to Georgetown which pours forth medical graduates as well as legal and literary citizens.

Right in the heart of the most important diplomatic centre of the present and future it seems providential that the Jesuits have built up so strong a fortress.

In the likeness of Georgetown they have built further in St. Louis, Chicago and as far as Santa Clara in California, not schools as we attain in this country but out and out universities.

The educational questions must differ in England and America, as Catholic colleges are conducted to reach the spreading group of English universities, whereas the American colleges of the S.J. have no need for finishing at Yale and Harvard and what correspond to the prestige of Oxford and Cambridge.

What the future holds in England seems very doubtful. Whatever education grants are obtained from the State for schools, it seems more and more difficult for them to be supported by sheer Catholic effort. In that case it would seem that a network of such Jesuit colleges as cover the United States would prove more important than the scattered elementary schools for which such sacrifices are called. What has been done over the years can be realised by Fr. Daly's book, which is a really well documented and stirring tale of Georgetown till the end of the first century. There has followed one century and a half since.

SHANE LESLIE

## SHORTER NOTICES

*The Sociology of Knowledge*, by Werner Stark (Routledge 36s).

THE TITLE of this book may depress certain readers who will imagine that we have here merely another essay in relativism and historicism. We do not talk much about Sociology of Knowledge in this country, and such information as some of us may possess about this discipline is probably derived from Karl Mannheim, whose views are basically relativist. We believe ourselves to be largely immune to ideologies and sceptical about utopias: and when Mannheim tells us that the finding of truth is a "creative concretisation flowing from historically unique constellations" we may feel that German Sociology could gain from clarification in the school of British logical analysis.

It must be at once pointed out that Dr. Stark is no extremist and rejects any ultra-historicist position. He endeavours, moreover, to bring some clarity and order into this rather woolly field. He comes down firmly on the side of absolute truth, even if he presents its attainment as a remote and perhaps unattainable ideal, a synthesis or

summation of perspectives that man may never finally achieve. This causes Dr. Stark no despair, for he believes with Lessing that an ever-active longing for Truth is more desirable than the possession of Truth itself. The metaphysician (and still more the theologian) will wish to qualify this to a certain extent, valid though it may be in the field of merely historical or scientific truth. Here, it may be, we proceed by accumulating perspectives, by attaining ever more all-embracing syntheses; but, in the analysis of any one valid act of knowing, in the glimpse of any one perspective, the metaphysician will discover a certain initial grasp of absolute Truth without which we could never set out on the quest for the Whole. Dr. Stark, however, fights shy of metaphysics and the ultimate questions.

Yet it is no injustice to Dr. Stark to say that the value of this work lies not so much in his own personal conclusions as in the careful account he gives of the various problems connected with the social determination of knowledge, and in the delimitation and classification of the solutions propounded. He has provided us with a guide and a map through this difficult country, and this book cannot be too highly recommended as a thorough and critical introduction to the subject. Our only regret here is the absence of a bibliography which would facilitate further exploration along the many paths and by-ways that Dr. Stark has opened up to the English reader. The very abundance of Dr. Stark's references and footnotes makes us the more conscious of this omission.

*The Human Situation*, by W. Macneile Dixon (Penguin Books 5s).

THE REPRINTING of the late Professor Dixon's popular Gifford Lectures after twenty years is a tribute to their engaging qualities. Some readers will be interested to compare these exuberant, personal, beautifully written, and, it must be confessed, rather heady and vertiginous pages with the sober astringency of contemporary British philosophy. There is much in the book that has worn well in spite of some attendant exaggerations: the somewhat Chestertonian stance; the defence of the immaterial and of free will; the arguments for the insufficiency of evolution, for a mind directing nature, for the personal immortality of the soul, and more besides. But the gaps are glaring. About the human situation Professor Dixon is copious; about the divine, agnostic. However, as he admits, we are all willy-nilly metaphysicians, and his own tentative scheme is a Leibnizian monadology, pantheistic in expression if not in intention. Leave-takings can be revealing, and perhaps the most significant sentence in the book is this on the second page: "To those who sail across the great ocean under the colours of revealed religion we dip our flag in greeting—and a good voyage to

them." True enough, revealed religion as such was not his pitch; but reason may not dismiss revelation—its possibility, its likelihood, its content—as curtly as that. Professor Dixon would have been willing to acknowledge some intellectual debt to the Christian heritage; but how sadly limited his portion remained may be gathered from another good-bye, namely the last sentence of the book:

I like to think that this singular race of indomitable, philosophising, poetical beings, resolute to carry the banner of Becoming to unimaginable heights, may be as interesting to the gods as they to us, and that they will stoop to admit these creatures of promise into their divine society.

*Sacred Doctrine*, by Edwin G. Kaiser, C.P.P.S. (Newman Press \$4.50).  
*The Papacy*, by Paolo Brezzi, translated by H. J. Yannone (Newman Press \$3.50).

TOO MANY PEOPLE, when asked what theology is, plunge at once into the task of listing its contents in so many propositions and do not pause to consider its method, but a reaction is setting in, and these summer-school lectures from America show Fr. Kaiser at work, giving a straightforward account of its nature, sources and method. Part of the work is an elementary *nomenclator* of the more notable theologians. He avoids the more controversial topics, but it might have been useful to give more extensively a single example of the development of a doctrine, such as the Immaculate Conception (with its roots in the Old Testament notion of the pain of childbirth as a punishment for original sin, the very early tradition of the painless birth of Christ, and the gradual elucidation of the consequence of these two ideas), rather than to say baldly that the doctrine is "an explanation of the holiness of Mary." There is a useful chapter on the varying degrees of approximation to dogma or to heresy which are properly used to classify theological statements.

There is room for a new book on the theology of the papacy, but it is not easy to see why this work of P. Brezzi should have been presented to an English-reading public. It has nothing to say about the new situation created by Cullmann's recent work, whereby Protestant criticism has abandoned the attempt to explain away the founding of the Church upon Peter and has taken refuge in a second-line position from which it is argued that Peter had handed over his powers to James by the time of the Council of Jerusalem. Nothing is said about the letter of the Council of Arles to Pope Sylvester, nothing about Stommel's recent work on the artistic portrayal in early times of the *Traditio legis* (where Peter receives the New Law from Christ as Moses had received the Old Law from God), nothing about Dvornik's

new orientation of the problem of Photius. The translator has added in a footnote a few brief facts about the excavations under the basilica of St. Peter's, but this does not really enlighten the reader about the statement in the author's text that the fact of the temporary removal of the bones of the apostle in early times is quite certain. It may suffice thus to trace the development of "the papacy as an institution" for students of theology in Naples, as the author did, but for English readers something much more searching is required.

*Benedict de Spinoza: The Elements of his Philosophy*, by H. F. Hallett, M.A., D.Litt. (University of London, Athlone Press 25s).

SEVERAL BOOKS on Spinoza have been published in this country in recent years. But Professor Hallett is convinced that it is very difficult for the "modern mind, steeped as it is in the sophistical heresies of a truncated empiristic philosophy," to grasp "the intellectual standpoint from which alone the thought of Spinoza is intelligible." He has therefore written a book designed to make clear the general principles of Spinozism and to prepare the mind for a study of the philosopher's works. It is intended, we are told, for the candid student, and not for the man in the train. And it is certainly not the type of book which one would normally select to while away the journey between Paddington and Penzance. But it is clearly written, and it is definite. That is to say, the author is in no doubt about the correct interpretation of Spinoza. Further, in spite of the inevitable aridity of any serious exposition of so uncompromisingly intellectualist a philosopher as Spinoza, the author's evident belief in the general validity of the system which he is expounding gives life to his book. And Professor Hallett emphasises the practical import of Spinoza's thought, that is, the philosopher's interest in "human salvation" through the knowledge and love of God.

In his exposition of the metaphysical system the author stresses the idea of activity. And some might be inclined to see in the system, when so interpreted, an approximation to an anticipation of Hegelianism. When one reads that for Spinoza God "exists or is actual as *Natura naturata* exhaustively and determinately realising the infinite, indeterminate potency-in-act that is *Natura naturans*," it is difficult not to be put in mind of Hegel. But Hegel, of course, would add that the all-important concept of Spirit is wanting, and that Spinozism was but a stage, though a momentous one, in the development of his own system. And Professor Hallett would doubtless see in the suggestion that Spinozism can be interpreted as a stage in the development of Hegelianism one more instance of the regrettable proneness of some writers to interpret Spinoza in terms of later categories.

Though he is not everybody's cup of tea, Spinoza repays study. For of all philosophers he is the one who most signally embodies what may be called rationalism as an ideal type of philosophising. And one can always learn from an outstanding thinker, even if it is only through reasoned disagreement.

*The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, by David Pole (The Athlone Press 15s).

*Ludwig Wittgenstein*, by Norman Malcolm (Oxford University Press 12s 6d).

DR. POLE has provided adequate signposts to guide us through the "labyrinth of paths" which constitutes Wittgenstein's later writings. He maintains that in spite of extreme subtlety in their elaboration, Wittgenstein's central ideas are essentially simple: that (1) language is a form of life, (2) language, like mathematics, is a "game" subject to rules which are ultimately arbitrary and (3) "an 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria." But contrary to his disclaimer, Dr. Pole objects, Wittgenstein has in fact proposed a philosophy of language. Moreover, in forbidding philosophers to tamper with the actual use of language he has laid down an arbitrary rule which conflicts with existing practice, his own canon of the legitimacy of a "language-game." Against Wittgenstein's attack on psychologism he urges that sometimes at least inner processes are essential for understanding and that our paradigm of sensations, for instance, of pain, is in some sense our own experience.

Yet Dr. Pole's criticisms indicate that Wittgenstein's central ideas are perhaps more subtle than he allows. He does not distinguish sharply enough between the immediacy and the privacy of understanding, nor does he diagnose precisely Wittgenstein's mistake of confusing the criteria for the ascription of pain in a public language with the recognition of pain by the sufferer. When pleading for metaphysics in a minor key, particularly in his epilogue on Professor Wisdom, Dr. Pole argues plausibly and cogently.

As a corrective to any mistaken notion that Wittgenstein was a desiccated philosopher Professor Malcolm's memoir portrays a sensitive human being who valued kindness more than culture, was exceptionally musical and artistic, had studied St. Augustine and Schopenhauer, yet much preferred Street and Smith magazines to *Mind*. He was more concerned with life than with logic. Unfortunately the account of his eccentricities suggests that the "absurd legends" were not in spirit so very far from the truth. More valuable as a counterblast to the legends is the impression of austere dedication to truth and stern sense of duty which emerges from these reminiscences.

Professor Malcolm's vivid portrait, rich in detail, finds an admirable complement in Professor von Wright's introductory sketch, which highlights more the significant traits in Wittgenstein's character.

*Revelation and Redemption*, by Dr. W. Grossouw, translated and edited by M. W. Schoenberg, O.S.C. (Geoffrey Chapman 8s 6d).

D R. GROSSOUW, of Nijmegen University, calls his book "an introduction to the *theology of St. John*," not, that is, to the "Gospel according to St. John," for he insists that "a serious and constant reading of the text" is "presupposed," as well as at least a rudimentary knowledge of the Catholic approach to the documents—for he rightly associates closely the theology of the First Epistle with that of the Gospel. He wishes to lead us not only to the threshold of the beloved disciple's thought and leave us there, but *into* the very "sanctum" of that thought. He dwells, first, on the material that John used and his way of using it; the author guards himself against the view that John wrote only an "allegoric" kind of history; though we think he might have indicated, now and again, more explicitly, how firmly based John is upon historic facts such as the Synoptists used, and indeed adds to them. But the "leading ideas" of the Evangelist—Light, Life, Love, Faith by which the whole man adheres to God and is supernaturalised—are clearly set forth; but, as the author says, a considerable knowledge of the text is presupposed. Granted this, its *analysis* will be very helpful, and finally the book as a whole should come alive. We add only that we think that there is in St. John's gospel more of a pattern, a forward march and development, than the author seems to accept.

*Our Lady in the Gospels*, by Professor J. Patsch; translated by the Rev. B. Wrighton (Burns and Oates 25s).

WE THINK the German title of this book—*Mary, the Mother of the Lord*—might well have been kept for, after all, there is very little about Our Lady in the Gospels themselves. The author writes much that is interesting about the topography of Palestine, about what can be known of the history of the various persons mentioned in the Gospels or Acts; and he describes at length what is said of Mary in apocryphal writings (only to brush it aside). On the other hand, he is much more certain about dates and other details than we would care to be. He also describes what Mary did, e.g., during the famine mentioned in the Acts, and during the rest of her life, and (with some probability) places her death in Jerusalem, because John will not have gone to Ephesus till the time of the Jewish war or after it, and "no one supposes" that Our Lady lived till she was ninety or so. The book, in short, is full of interesting digressions based on a very wide learning; of a

good deal of speculation about what Mary felt or did; and some pious commentary out of place, we think, in this book, nor are we clear about what class of readers is intended: the "educated Catholic" himself will hardly demand the transliteration of Hebrew words, but well might like some elucidation of the problem connected with the date of the Last Supper or the hours of the crucifixion. It is hardly enough to say, simply, that the time of the crucifixion given in St. John is due to "an ancient error in the text," so that Our Lord was on the Cross for six long hours.

*The Green Flash and other Low Sun Phenomena*, by D. J. K. O'Connell, S.J. (Vatican Observatory; North Holland Publishing Company 42s).

THE NAME perhaps suggests detective fiction, but Fr. O'Connell's book records a different type of detection. Watch the sun sometime when it is setting in a clear sky against a distant horizon. As the last thin segment of sun sinks under the horizon, at the very point and moment of its disappearance, a pure emerald green point of light may appear, flash like a beacon and disappear. The incident is as memorable as its occurrence is capricious, and its comparative rarity may account for its escaping serious notice till the last century, and for its origin and even objectivity being questioned until even the 1920's. An elementary explanation in terms of atmospheric dispersion, scattering and absorption has been generally accepted for some time, but this has left much of the capriciousness unexplained.

The magnificent series of eighty close-up colour photographs of the flash made with the Vatican Observatory telescopes by the initiative and skill of Brother Treusch, S.J., now provide the first published records of their kind, and shed much light on the mystery remaining.

It is because these photographs not only enable the reader to see the flash for himself but to see it as it has probably never been seen before, that it seems opportune to mention this little scientific monograph here; for once we have a technical book whose chief attraction for a wide variety of readers will be the enjoyment of reading the pictures.

*Man is your Brother*, by Abbé Pierre, translated by Ronald Matthews (Geoffrey Chapman 10s 6d).

THOUSANDS will have heard of the Abbé Pierre and his heroic work done for the destitute in the suburbs of Paris, and have thought of him, perhaps, as an unpractical enthusiast destined to failure and disappearance. Here we have five televised interviews (in which the announcer does really play a subordinate part, and elicit genuine information from the abbé), a discussion with M. Scheyven,

a Brussels deputy and late President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, a Good Friday talk, and five Lenten talks. The first five of these speeches dealt with "The Preliminaries to Freedom—Food, Housing, Work, Knowledge," and prove first that the Abbé Pierre knows what he is talking about, and is not merely supplying palliatives to a number of immediate miseries. (One example—Japan reads more newspapers, proportionately, than the U.S.A.—400 per 1,000 of the population, compared with 339. France reads 246 per 1,000, and the U.K. 570—and imagine the deforestation this implies.) Not that he is the victim of statistics, as the way in which he deals with housing and unemployment shows.

When the Abbé Pierre made his appeal for the homeless of Paris, our first impression was that nothing had improved since we first read about this very problem sixty years ago, and indeed we think it has not. We were, next, surprised by the "insurrection of kindness" that followed his appeal, but expected it would die down, as of course it did. And thirdly, we knew that a general and steadfast will towards establishing justice in the world ought to follow, but felt sure that it would not, nor did it. But even the Apostles, even after Pentecost, did not transform even the whole of their own "world," nor for ever.

*The Long Year*, by James W. Drawbell (Allan Wingate 18s).

THIS is a more or less day-to-day diary covering the first year of the Second World War, from 1 September 1939 to 5 October 1940, written by the then editor of the *Sunday Chronicle*. The author, a Scot by birth—a somewhat odd reference to "Galloway, in Dumfriesshire" on p. 116 may be attributed to overlong residence south of the border—was in London during the hectic months he describes, working in his office by day and sleeping, with admirable unconcern at night, on the fourth floor of a Bloomsbury hotel. He was a devoted family man, and one gets the impression that the occasional weekend visits that he was able to pay to his children in the country accounted in no small measure for the enviable nerve he showed in facing conditions under which even the strongest were known to wilt. Mr. Drawbell, in his position as editor of an influential newspaper, also came in contact with a number of public men; of these he gives us his impressions based, at least in some cases, on close acquaintanceship, and in others presumably on chance observation. Lord Reith, in his capacity as Minister of Information, comes in for some rough handling here.

Those days, of the phoney war, the fall of France and the Battle of Britain, may seem remote from us now in time—remote, and at the same time all too well remembered. Nevertheless, for the lessons

which it contains for us today as well as for the interest it holds as a record of things seen by one intelligent onlooker who, although not a member of any inmost circle yet was in contact with many who were, this fresh account of the country's finest hour is worth reading.

*A Death in the Family*, by James Agee (Gollancz 16s).

**T**HIS STRANGE BOOK is really unfinished, owing to the author's sudden and untimely death in 1955. Certain passages which presumably he meant to include are incorporated where the American editors thought they fitted best. They are in italics which rather tires the eyes, and, though often very beautiful are not always readily intelligible. But the book does not need them, in fact, even without them, we think it needs abbreviation. The scene is a small town in Tennessee, forty years ago. The family described is very simple; a mother and father, and two young children enchantingly drawn. We hope that Mr. Agee would have pruned away the page and a half now occupied with the noises made by a motor-car being started: even in an Alice-book, Lewis Carroll would not have printed so long a curve of unpronounceable consonants! If this episode in the life of an ordinary family is not quite successfully related, this is not due to the book being unrevised, so much as to Mr. Agee's having been really a poet: still, the prose in which he related the affection that sustained the home of which he wrote and the sorrow that befell it, is charged with a quiet but deep emotion, and all the English-speaking world—both the British and the American way of life—will be poorer for the loss not only to letters but for an all too rare encouragement to those who prefer to read—or hope to get published—what does not rely on violence or sexual aberrations. Honestly, people are relieved to find they can be quite likeable even if they don't break two or more Commandments.

*Son of Dust*, by H. F. M. Prescott (Eyre and Spottiswoode 16s).

**M**ISS PRESCOTT set herself so high a standard in *The Man on a Donkey* and rose to it so wonderfully that we could scarcely expect any other work of hers to match it. And indeed anyone who chooses to place a story in eleventh-century Normandy has undertaken, we feel, a harder task. For that earlier century was, so to say, more complicated though far less varied than later ones. Social life was a network of greater and lesser obligations to lords and overlords, add, the homage to be paid to blood, even when it ran in a bastard's veins. Inevitably, therefore, we feel, Miss Prescott surcharges her book with so many personages that it is hard to remember who everybody is. Nor are we surprised to find an endless succession of feuds, and so much

battling between men whose animal passions were with such difficulty curbed. Nor in our tamer times can we easily understand the overwhelming belief in God and Sin that did in fact restrain what might have seemed doomed to become a world of carnage and of lust. Nor have we been taught to realise the hidden patient work of the monasteries, slowly civilising this illiterate world. The story here is really that of the love of Fulcun for Alde, wife of Mauger of Fervacques with its all-but unending tale of hatred and repentance, blood and tears. But we cannot deny that this brings us through situations so nearly identical that we become haunted by the fear that we may actually become bored—and then realise how tedious life must have seemed both to the men and women who formed the dominant class, if some sort of quarrel or love-making was not going on. Miss Prescott's exquisite power of evoking an atmosphere, dawn and dusk, field and forest, fails (for me) at one point—I cannot picture the houses, the castles greater or smaller, in which her personages lived. How high were stone towers before they turned into woodwork superstructures? A "great hall"—how large was it really? I am able to picture the people and the distances, but not the nearer surroundings. The canvas seems over-crowded with rich colouring; the love-drama is told with tragic intensity, and is quite unlike, we may say, that of Tristan, Isolde and Mark, if only because there is throughout Another, that is, Conscience, that is, God.

*The Portuguese Escape*, by Ann Bridge (Chatto and Windus 16s).

ANN BRIDGE writes as brilliantly as ever, with a dry but friendly humour and an enjoyment of life which is becoming impossible for so many. For the story tells of the rescue from Hungary of a young girl, Hetta Páloczy, and of a Hungarian priest, so that the background is tragic enough. Hetta's mother is a wealthy American, an indomitable social climber, and nothing is more amusing than to watch the eluding, quelling and even assisting of this lady by Hetta's feudal self-possession, at once modest and overriding. But the young countess was at once caught up into the ambassadorial circles of Portugal and into a ducal and even semi-royal world, owing to that strange sense which makes people know who fits in with whom. Happily she did not find she could happily dance in the strange minuet demanded by the diplomatic world; nor could she belong to the grand patriarchal system into which she entered outside Lisbon, though she shared so many of its virtues—dignity and simplicity. It was Portuguese and she wasn't—no more can we say. But the sympathy as well as acuteness of the character-drawing, and the enchanting descriptions of scenery and its spirit must not make you

think that this will fail to be quite an exciting story with an ending naturally (and so, we fear, unfashionably) happy. And what a relief to be reminded that after all there are plenty of likeable people in the world!

*Worlds Apart: A Tour of European Monasteries*, by Tudor Edwards (Longmans 25s).

THIS BOOK consists, really, of several tours, and the beautifully drawn map shows that the monasteries visited were but a few in Spain or Italy or the southern or western major part of France, but on the whole were found from Normandy and eastward from the Rhône along southern Germany and Austria. How tragic that Hungary and other lands under Russian tyranny had to be omitted! Much of this delightful book consists of descriptions of scenery for which we are grateful, but we would have liked many more pictures of the monasteries actually visited, rather than, e.g., of monks doing manual work, who are much the same everywhere. But so much of the author's pilgrimages took place in pouring rain, and why he should have gone anywhere at all in winter baffles one! His immense erudition does not prevent him from being realist, and of course Catholic and especially Latin countries *are* realist, though we deplore that so many of these buildings, which are ancient, should have been smothered beneath or even replaced by baroque or rococo: and we could wish that St. Maximin in Provence had been more than merely named. The book leaves us with the conviction of the sublimity of the monastic vocation, the constant need of self-reformation by monastic orders, and the insane brutality of those who try to destroy them.

*The Batsford Book of Children's Verse*, edited by Elizabeth Jennings (Batsford 12s 6d).

MISS JENNINGS rightly makes no attempt to collect poems that children ought to like, but proceeds on the basis of what she herself did like. She knows that verse written especially for children is seldom to their taste; it is apt to condescend: children, she truly says, are at home among mysteries; but is this because they have no prejudices or preconceptions, and so, follow easily what is obscure to grown-ups? What mattered to my own childhood was, whether verse (or prose, for that matter) had magic in it, and this had nothing to do with clarity or the reverse. Thus the lines *Ma chandelle est morte—Je n'ai pas de feu* were at once magical for me; so were the four lines in *Hamlet* ending with "The bird of dawning singeth all night long," but what more clear? Much of the *Apocalypse* was both magical and obscure (but how could Miss Jennings choose Apoc. 19: 11-19 when there is so much loveliness in that book: I don't know what a child

would make of G. M. Hopkins's *Mary compared to the Air*, set just before those blood-red verses). How long does Miss Jennings consider "childhood" to last? till twelve? Well before that, the whole of Virgil was "magical" for me (if not always construable!). Anyhow, she flings her net wide—Traherne, Herrick, Lear, Kipling, Chesterton, Yeats, Auden, Eliot; and may children meet "magic" oftener than I do in many of these poems: they *ought* to catch a glimpse of it in the coloured photos.

*The Presocratic Philosophers*, by G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven (Cambridge University Press 55s).

THE PRESOCRATICS perennially afford a fair field for speculative interpretation, especially to those with philosophic axes to grind. This was conspicuous, for example, in Farrington's *Greek Science*, written from the Marxist viewpoint, and more recently in the "liberal humanist" complexion of Havelock's *Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*. This book on the Presocratic physicists is especially welcome in offsetting such bias, for it is based on a careful selection of the Greek texts themselves. The authors have in each case appended a literal translation and an exegesis. The time is past when students of philosophy could all be expected to cope with Latin commentaries like that of Ritter and Preller; and Diels-Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, is too unwieldy (and too expensive) for use in seminar-study. This book thus meets a real need for English-speaking students. At the same time, by skilful typographic arrangement, it includes discussions of more academic moment on controverted issues of text and interpretation.

The authors are two young Cambridge scholars who have already made scholarly contributions in this field. Mr. Kirk is well known for his collection of and commentary on the cosmic fragments of Heraclitus. He here contributes a long initial chapter on cosmogonies in pre-philosophic Greek contexts, a useful introduction because of their obvious influence on the Ionian thinkers. He follows this with chapters on Thales, Anaximander (one might have hoped for a little more on his theories of anthropogony), Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, the Atomists, and finally Diogenes of Apollonia. Mr. Raven's previous work, *Pythagoreans and Eleatics*, makes him competent to discuss the peculiarly Italian tradition, with three chapters on Pythagoras and his adherents. The subsequent sections on Parmenides and Zeno suggest that their arguments for the indivisibility of reality and their proofs against motion can best be appreciated in an anti-Pythagorean context. Finally, the pluralist systems of Empedocles and Anaxagoras are rightly considered pre-eminently as a reaction against the central formulation of Parmenides.

In the passages which this reviewer scrutinised closely, there are a few errors of translation or text; it is difficult for Homer not to nod occasionally in such extensive quotation. The publishers deserve especial commendation for their skill in surmounting difficult problems of presentation; this is a beautifully produced book.

*The Mark*, by C. Israel (Macmillan 15s).

M R. ISRAEL can write well and sympathises with a great variety of mental states, but since his story deals with child-rape it is really suited to a psychiatrist's case-book: it makes clear the appalling danger of mass-treatment, though he need not have chosen so egregious a psychiatrist as an example. He exhibits, too, the cynical brutality and hypocrisy to which the most degraded form of American journalism can sink. Since there is no reference to God, or faith in Him, the ending, heroic as one woman's choice may be, can provide no more than a hope-against-hope for a cure.

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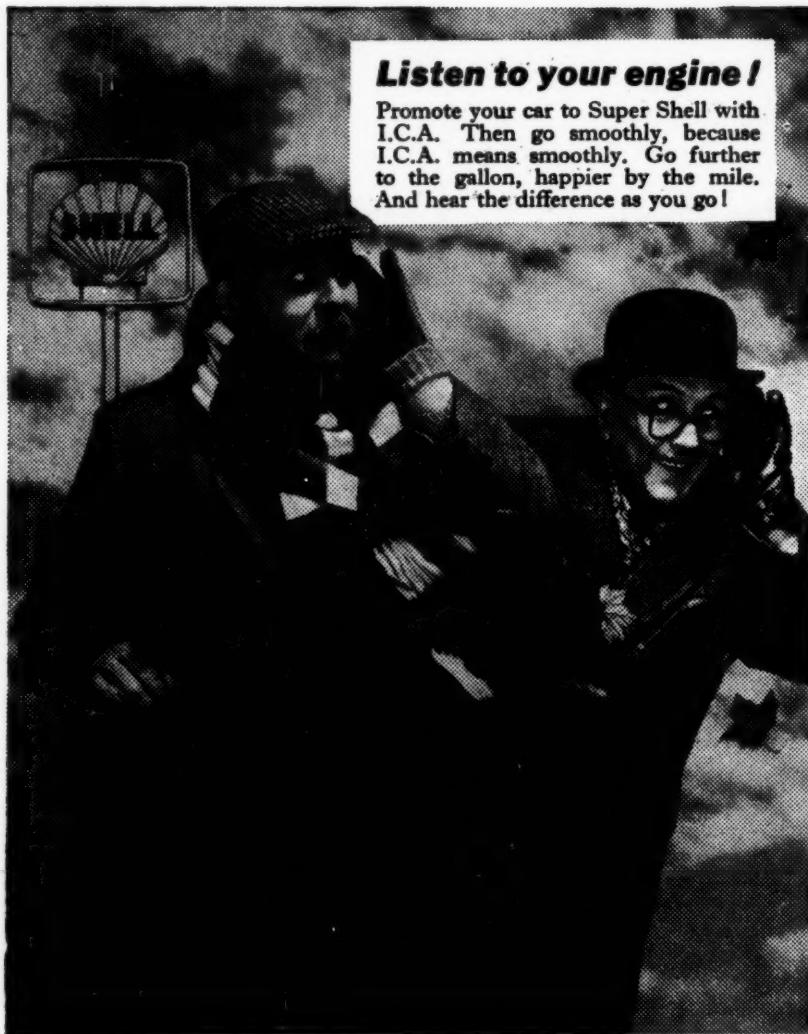
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## Kinder, Kirche, Küche . . .

may have been the cry of the women of Germany and those who ruled their fate, but we are not so sure that it is not the maxim of the *Catholic Herald* women readers. According to a survey, they have 12% more children than the national figure, and, quite out of gear with the modern trend, 90·9%, no less, state their profession to be full-time housewives.

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